THE TERMS PLEROMA AND KENOSIS

In The

THEOLOGY OF ST. PAUL,

With Special Reference To

THE PERSON OF JESUS CHRIST

By

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TO MY FATHER AND MOTHER

PREFACE

This is an inquiry into the Pauline doctrine of the Person of Jesus Christ. It will turn particularly upon St. Paul's use of Pleroma and Kenosis as applied to Christ. It also involves the use of Pleroma with reference to the Church in its relation to Christ.

My indebtedness to scholars past and present is hereby gratefully acknowledged and will be indicated to some extent in the footnotes. I should like to express appreciation especially to my advisors, Professor William Manson, D. D., and Professor James S. Stewart, D. D., and to the Librarians at New College, the Reverend J. B. Primrose, B. D., and Miss Erna R. Leslie.

Gerhard Kittel's monumental work, Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament, is still in the process of production and at this writing has not yet reached "Pleroma." It remains to be seen whether his work will open up new avenues to this word previously undiscovered.

Where American spelling and punctuation differ from the British, I have followed the former since my background makes me more familiar with it.

In presenting this thesis, I should like to use the words of A. B. Bruce in the Preface to the second edition of

The Humiliation of Christ, to express my own sentiment:

> "Let me express the hope that in spite of defects, these studies may promote the growth in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and by their very shortcomings stir up others to handle the high theme more worthily."
>
> Jennings B. Reid.

May, 1949.

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PART TWO: KENOSIS

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Abbreviations:
EGT - Expositor's Greek Testament.
HzNT - Handbuch zum Neuen Testament.
ICC - International Critical Commentary.
MNTC - Moffatt's New Testament Commentary.

INTRODUCTION

The two Christological passages, Colossians i. 15-20 and Philippians ii. 5-11 stand in a certain formal contrast to each other. This is evident from even a casual reading of the passages and becomes more apparent upon a detailed study of them. Dibelius says:

> "Aus solchen Interessen heraus hat Paulus hier (i.e., Col. i. 15-20) betont, dass der zur Erlösung gesandte Christus die Fülle der Gottheit in sich trug. Philipper ii. 5 ff. ist von dem gegenteiligen Interesse geleitet; dort wird hervorgehoben, dass Christus auf seine gottgleiche Würdestellung verzichtet habe, um menschengleich zu werden."[1]

In the first passage, Paul presents the preeminence of Christ in creation and the Church, His complete adequacy as Redeemer and His supremacy over everything on earth and in heaven alike save God Himself, whose "image" He is. The Apostle builds up phrase upon phrase to show the Lordship and glory of Christ. It is as though Paul lacked language sufficient to portray the exalted position, but calling upon such resources of speech and such concepts as he had at command, he made use of all of them in ascribing to Christ the very highest place human thought can give Him. When he declares, "It was the divine good pleasure that in Him all the Pleroma should dwell,"[2] he leaves nothing more to be said.

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1. Martin Dibelius, Handbuch zum Neuen Testament, Kolosser, Epheser an Philemon, p. 15.

2. Col. i. 19.

In the second passage, Paul presents as the supreme example of humility the Kenosis of Christ.[1] Once again the Apostle[2] employs phrase upon phrase, but this time not to build up His exalted estate but rather to show His willing surrender of it, His self-divestment, to take the very lowest possible place, excepting sin only. The Saviour is pictured as voluntarily descending lower and lower until the very bottom rung is reached, death upon a cross. The depth intended in the Apostle's words is paraphrased by Lightfoot thus:

> "I said death, but it was no common death. It was a death which involved not intense suffering only but intense shame also: a death reserved for malefactors and slaves: a death on which the Mosaic law has uttered a curse, and which even Gentiles consider the most foul and cruel of all punishments; which has been ever after to the Jews a stumblingblock and to the Greeks foolishness."[3]

We have then in the Apostle's total concept of Christ both a Pleroma and a Kenosis, both a "fulness" and an "emptying," corresponding to the height and the depth of His Person and work. Both terms originated from the same period of the Apostle's life.[4] Therefore one cannot say, as some have held regarding certain doctrines of the Apostle, that one concept was early and the other a later development in his thought. Rather, both were simultaneously held.

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1. The term Kenosis originates, of course, from Phil. ii. 7 from the verb κενόω , meaning "to empty or to make void."

2. Paul was possibly quoting from an early Christian hymn, which we shall note further in Chapter V.

3. Lightfoot, The Epistles of St. Paul, Philippians, p. 111.

4. Both Epistles come from the same imprisonment, whether that imprisonment was at Rome or Ephesus.

Yet the Apostle would never have claimed to have comprehended the full significance of the Person of Christ. Once he prayed that the Ephesians might come to know the love of Christ, its breadth and length and height and depth, then immediately confessed that it was beyond knowledge.[1] So, too, was the Person of Christ, and all terms adopted to describe Him were necessarily inadequate. Pleroma and Kenosis, then, expressive as they are, are mere pointers in the way, the former pointing up and the latter pointing down. Beyond there is more!

The general plan of the discourse to follow is simple. There are three parts. Part one will deal with Pleroma. Our particular interest is in the use which Paul makes of the term. However, we shall have to examine its use in non-Pauline sources for any light which they may shed on its employment by the Apostle.

Part two will deal with Kenosis. Naturally we shall examine more closely the Philippians passage. Then we shall look into some of the Kenotic theories which have been built around the passage, whether justifiably or not. It must be kept in mind, however, that our primary interest is not in the Kenotic theories as such, but in discovering, if we can, the Apostle's original concept of Christ.

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1. Eph. iii. 18-19. Without going into the question of genuineness, in this thesis we shall assume Paul's authorship of Ephesians.

Part three will be concerned with the relationship between these two concepts, Pleroma and Kenosis, and their relevance to a better understanding of the Person and work of Christ.

PART ONE

P L E R O M A

"The Christology of St. Paul is possessed of that sublime and inexhaustible quality which is native to enduring truth. His loftiest descriptions of the Lord Jesus, far from having faded into obsolescence, still evoke our reflection, as they elude it, by their very greatness. They are still beyond us as of old; we can but throw out our minds at an infinite reality; and to the last the believing consciousness will vainly strive to know the depth and height beheld by the Apostle in Christ Jesus as he wrote: 'In Him were all things created, in the heavens and the earth, things visible and things invisible. . . . for in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.'"[1]

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1. H. R. Mackintosh, The Person of Jesus Christ, pp. 76 f.

CHAPTER I.

THE USE OF PLEROMA IN NON-BIBLICAL SOURCES.

Our aim in this chapter is two-fold: (1) To try to determine whether Pleroma is ever used in an active sense, as well as passive. This question bears directly upon our interpretation of Ephesians i. 23 with which we shall deal in chapter four. If Pleroma there is active, then it means that the Church is that which completes Christ, bringing His purpose and work to fulfilment. If, on the other hand, Pleroma is passive, it means that Christ completes the Church, filling it with His Person and graces and thus bringing it to its fulfilment. (2) We shall attempt to trace the theological connotation of Pleroma from its rudimentary sources to the later highly developed schemes of the Gnostics. This is important so that we may determine as nearly as possible the theological value attached to the word in the New Testament, especially as used by St. Paul in Colossians where conceivably he seizes one of the catchwords of the heretics and turns it against them.[1] Of course we take it for granted that he filled the term with new significance, but what that significance was can be better understood if we know the connotation of the word in the heresy, and also as it was more generally used.

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1. So E. F. Scott, MNTC, Colossians, p. 26; T. K. Abbott, ICC, Ephesians and Colossians, Intro., lvii; and many other commentators. We shall have a closer examination of terms under Chapter III.

The modern interest in the Pauline use of Pleroma may be said to have begun with a paper (1796) by Professor D. Gottlob Christian Storr, Professor of Theology at Tübingen, in which he contended that Pleroma always has an active sense in the New Testament.[1] There were other German writers who followed Storr's lead. Professor Storr's paper became the occasion for an answer and rebuttal by Professor C. F. A. Fritzsche who, in his Commentary on Romans (1839), argued that Pleroma customarily has a passive sense, though he admits exceptions to this.[2] Though some later scholars, notably Lightfoot, have differed with Fritzsche in some of his conclusions, all have been indebted to him for his lexicographical references.

The next outstanding work in this connection was by Professor J. B. Lightfoot. In his Commentary on Colossians (1875), he has a detached note on Pleroma in which he examines the use of the word in both classical and Biblical sources and contends for a passive sense throughout.[3] Thus we have a complete reversal of the stand taken by Storr.

This was followed by an article, "The Church as the Fulfilment of the Christ," by Professor J. Armitage Robinson, in The Expositor (1898),[4] in which he takes note of former

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1. Storr, Opuscula Academica ad Interpretationem Librorum Sacrorum Pertinentia, Vol. I, pp. 144 ff.

2. Fritzsche, Pauli ad Romanos Epistola, Vol. II, pp. 469 ff.

3. Lightfoot, The Epistles of St. Paul, Colossians and Philemon, pp. 257 ff.

4. Robinson in The Expositor, 1898, Fifth Series, Vol. VII, pp. 241 ff. In his Commentary, St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians, 1903, pp. 41-45 and 255-258, his arguments are almost identical with his article in The Expositor.

works and begs to differ from Lightfoot in giving Pleroma a universally passive sense.[1] He differs from him especially regarding Ephesians i. 23, where, he contends, Pleroma has an active sense, the Church being that which fulfils Christ.

Besides the above mentioned four, other commentators are divided in their opinions regarding the active or passive sense of Pleroma, especially in the aforesaid Ephesians passage.

Where language does not give the final answer to the problem, the context and a general knowledge of St. Paul's theology must be depended upon to determine particular cases, the deductive method. As Principal G. S. Duncan says in another connection:

> "In the Gospel story there are certain dominating features which stand out with the challenging clarity of mountain peaks; and it is desirable to begin by having a clear general view of these, both in themselves and in their relation one to another. The individual sayings and episodes, on the other hand, are like tracks through the heather, full of interest and significance for the traveller who wishes this closer approach, but sometimes too ill-defined to provide by themselves a clear way to the summit. No doubt, if the peak is lost in the mists, the traveller will sedulously pick his way by the various tracks as best he can. But

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1. Lightfoot contends that all nouns ending in -μα are passive, formed from the perfect passive (The Epistles of St. Paul, Colossians and Philemon, pp. 257 f.). We cannot discuss this problem here. It is enough to refer the reader to Robinson who, rightly I think, refutes this as an infallible lexical rule and shows that often nouns ending in -μα are used with an active sense. Also, many nouns ending in -σις , which according to lexical rules should be active, are used passively. The conclusion he reaches is that usage is the only final test. Robinson, The Expositor, 1898, pp. 242-248; and St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians, pp. 255-258.

> if he knows the general contour and the relative position of the peaks, that very knowledge will enable him often to choose the right path where otherwise he might go astray."[1]

But even so, one cannot afford to be dogmatic on these controversial points and must always be tolerant toward a difference of opinion. Also, there is always the possibility in such cases of reading one's own thought into Paul's and finding what we want to find. Nevertheless, such a process as stated above, carefully used, should bring us close to the Apostle's original intent.

The Meaning of the Word.

Let us note first the meaning of the verb, πληροῦν. It has two senses, literal and metaphorical. It may mean either:

(1) Literally, "to fill."
e.g., John xvi. 6. ἀλλ' ὅτι ταῦτα λελάληκα ὑμῖν, ἡ λύπη πεπλήρωκεν ὑμῶν τὴν καρδίαν.

(2) Metaphorically, "to fulfil, to complete, to perfect."
e.g., Matt. v. 17. Μὴ νομίσητε ὅτι ἦλθον καταλῦσαι τὸν νόμον ἢ τοὺς προφήτας· οὐκ ἦλθον καταλῦσαι, ἀλλὰ πληρῶσαι.

Turning from the verb to the noun, the meaning naturally varies depending on whether an active or passive sense is conveyed.

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1. Duncan, Jesus, Son of Man, Preface, p. ix.

Pleroma, if understood as active.

(1) Literally, "the filling substance, the contents of a receptacle or other container, that which is filled in to make the object full or complete."
e.g., I Cor. x. 26. τοῦ γὰρ Κυρίου ἡ γῆ καὶ τὸ πλήρωμα αὐτῆς.

(2) Metaphorically, "that which fulfils, hence the fulfilment of anything, that which makes perfect, that which is the full attainment of a goal."
e.g., Rom. xiii. 10. πλήρωμα οὖν νόμου ἡ ἀγάπη.

Pleroma, if understood as passive.

(1) Literally, "the filled receptacle, the result of filling, the object completed, the full quota met."
e.g., Rom. xi. 12. . . . . πόσῳ μᾶλλον τὸ πλήρωμα αὐτῶν;

(2) Metaphorically, "that which is fulfilled, the result of fulfilling, that which has been made perfect or complete; hence the fulfilment, the perfection, the completeness."
e.g., Gal. iv. 4. ὅτε δὲ ἦλθε τὸ πλήρωμα τοῦ χρόνου, ἐξαπέστειλεν ὁ Θεὸς τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ.

A. The Use of Pleroma in Classical and Later Greek.

Pleroma was used in classical and later Greek as a nautical term, as an army term, with reference to a population or citizen body, and to designate the full content or completeness of various things. We shall consider the term under these four headings.

(1) Pleroma As a Nautical Term.

As a nautical term, Pleroma underwent a development and hence has different shades of meaning. πληροῦν ναῦν is a common expression for "manning a ship."

e.g., Xenophon, Hellenica, VI, ii, 35.

καὶ αὐτὸς πληρωσάμενος τὴν ναῦν ἐξέπλει.

"And he, having manned the ship, was sailing out to sea."[1]

Pleroma itself sometimes referred to "the crew by which the ship was manned."

e.g., Xenophon, Hellenica, V, i, 11.

καὶ ἀπὸ τῶν πληρωμάτων δὲ τῶν ἐκ τῶν νεῶν ἐκήρυξε βοηθεῖν ὅσοι ἐλεύθεροι εἶεν.

"And he (Gorgopas) made proclamation that from the crews of the ships, as many as were freemen should render assistance."

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1. For other examples, see Xenophon, Hellenica, I, vi, 24; VI, ii, 12, 14; Thucydides, VII, xiv, 2; Polybius, Histories, I, xlvii, 6; and Plutarch, Alcibiades, XXXV, 5. Many of the classical references given in this chapter can be found in the Loeb Classical Library. I have taken the liberty of altering the translations, however, when it seemed desirable to do so. Such changes are usually for the purpose of making the translations more literal.

Philo, Quod Omnis Probus Liber Sit, XX, 142.

ἄγαμαι καὶ τῶν Ἀργοναυτῶν οἳ συμπαν ἀπέφηναν
ἐλεύθερον τὸ πλήρωμα μηδένα μηδὲ τῶν εἰς
ἀναγκαίας ὑπηρεσίας προσέμενοι δοῦλον.

"I also admire the Argonauts, who made their crew consist entirely of the free, neither admitted any slave at all, not even those to perform the necessary menial tasks."[1]

Sometimes it referred to "the ship itself," perhaps meaning, however, "a ship fully manned."

e.g., Lucian, Verae Historiae, II, 37.

Προσβαλόντες οὖν ἡμῖν ἀπὸ δύο πληρωμάτων
ἐμαχόντο καὶ πολλοὺς κατετραυμάτιζον βάλλοντες
ἀντὶ λίθων τῷ σπέρματι τῶν κολοκυνθῶν.

"Driving in then toward us they attacked from two ships and wounded many, pelting us with the seeds of the pumpkins instead of stones."[2]

Sometimes Pleroma referred to the "cargo" of the ship, perhaps meaning "the ship itself and its full load."

e.g., Philo, Quod Omnis Probus Liber Sit, VII, 41.

ὁ δέ γε σοφὸς εὐδαίμων, ἔρμα καὶ πλήρωμα
καλοκἀγαθίας ἐπιφερόμενος.

"But the wise man is happy, ballasted and freighted by his high morality."

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1. Other examples of Pleroma as "a ship's crew," Xenophon, Hellenica, I, vi, 16; Thucydides, VII, iv, 6; VII, xiv, 1; Polybius, Histories, I, xlix, 4, 5; I, 1, 9, 10; Lysias, XXI, 10; Plutarch, Alcibiades, XXXV, 5.

2. For a similar use, cf. Lucian, Verae Historiae, II, 38.

A quite similar use is made in the same work where Philo says that Hercules was thrown overboard by the Argonauts, "not for any wrongdoing, but because he alone was πλήρωμα καὶ ἔρμα enough to overload the vessel."[1] Elsewhere Philo says that Noah and his family and creatures of every kind entered the ark, then speaks of τὸ πλήρωμα as "a miniature (ἀντίμιμον) of the entire earth."[2]

The next stage in the unfolding of the word is very important, for Pleroma refers not to a single ship but to a number of them considered as a unit, furnished by a particular party, a constituent part of the total fleet, that which helps to make up the entire fighting force, which would be an active sense.

e.g., Herodotus, VIII, 43.

ἐκ μὲν Πελοποννήσου Λακεδαιμόνιοι ἑκκαίδεκα νέας παρεχόμενοι, Κορίνθιοι δὲ τὸ αὐτὸ πλήρωμα παρεχόμενοι καὶ ἐπ' Ἀρτεμισίῳ· Σικυώνιοι δὲ πεντεκαίδεκα παρείχοντο νέας, Ἐπιδαύριοι δὲ δέκα, Τροιζήνιοι δὲ πέντε. . . .

"From Peloponnesos, the Lacedaemonians furnished sixteen ships, the Corinthians furnished the same Pleroma as at Artemisium; the Sicyonians furnished fifteen ships, the Epidaurians ten, the Troizenians five. . . .[3]

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1. Philo, Quod Omnis Probus Liber Sit, XVIII, 128. In this reference and the one just given, Pleroma could hardly mean otherwise than the cargo or freight which fills and therefore weights the ship. If regarded as "that which fills the ship," it would have an active sense. Perhaps originally, however, it meant "the cargo filled in."

2. Philo, De Vita Mosis, II, xii, 62.

3. A quite similar case is found a few sentences below, "The Megarians furnished the same Pleroma as at Artemisium." Herodotus, VIII, 45.

It is possible that the contingent of ships furnished by the Corinthians is thought of as "a full unit" in itself and therefore is designated "Pleroma." However, the context here, and other evidence which we shall consider presently, lead me to conclude that it means "a constituent part of the total."[1]

(2) Pleroma As an Army Term.

Similar to the case just cited about the fleet, Pleroma is also used of an army unit furnished by a particular party, either as a component of the total, or as a unit complete in itself.

e.g., Aristides, Orations, I, 381.

μήτε αὐτάρκεις ἔσεσθαι πλήρωμα ἑνὸς οἰκείου στρατεύματος παρασχέσθαι.

"Neither will they be of themselves sufficient to supply a Pleroma of one household army."[2]

(3) Pleroma As Used of a Population or Citizen Body.

Sometimes Pleroma is used to refer to the entire citizen body. Thus Aristotle cites Socrates as saying that the essential elements of a state (or city) are a weaver, farmer, shoemaker, builder, coppersmith, merchant, retail trader, and those to look after the necessary livestock. Then he adds:

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1. The normal term for this would be "complement," but since this has a double signification and Lightfoot uses it as meaning "the total" rather than "that part which when added makes up the total," I shall purposely avoid the word.

2. In Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Roman Antiquities, VI, 51, Pleroma refers to the entire army.

καὶ ταῦτα πάντα γίνεται πλήρωμα τῆς πρώτης πόλεως.

"And all these together constitute a Pleroma of the first city (or, the city in its simplest form)."[1]

But more important, Pleroma may refer to a constituent part of the total citizen body, just as above it referred to a part of the total fleet.

e.g., Plato, Republic, II, 371E.

πλήρωμα δὴ πόλεώς εἰσιν, ὡς ἔοικε, καὶ μισθωτοί.

"Wage-earners also then, so it seems, are a component of the state."

Aristotle, Politics, III, viii, 1. (i.e., Politics 1284a, 5).

εἰ δέ τίς ἐστιν εἷς τοσοῦτον διαφέρων κατ' ἀρετῆς ὑπερβολήν, ἢ πλείους μὲν ἑνὸς μὴ μέντοι δυνατοὶ πλήρωμα παρασκέσθαι πόλεως. . . .

"But if there is any one man so greatly distinguished in outstanding virtue, or more than one man, these are not able to furnish a component of a city (or state). . . . it is no longer proper to count these exceptional men as a part (μέρος) of the city; for they will be treated unjustly if deemed of equal status, being so widely unequal in virtue and in their political ability, since such a man will naturally be as a god among men."[2]

It is to be noted that Pleroma here is practically equivalent to μέρος. It could not possibly mean the total in this context, nor have as its underlying meaning "completeness" as Lightfoot

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1. From Aristotle, Politics, IV, iii, 12. (i.e., Politics, 1291a, 17). A similar use will be found in Aristides, Orations, I, 374.

2. Cf. Aristotle, Politics, II, iv, 13, (i.e. Politics, 1267b, 5), where according to Phales, all the artisans are to be slaves and are not to furnish a Pleroma of the city.

suggests of this passage, except as it may mean that part which completes the whole. But Lightfoot does not mean this.[1] Likewise, Aristides uses the word in referring to "domestic servants, not unworthy, or which are deemed a Pleroma of a nation,"[2] where the term obviously means "a part of a nation's total citizen body." In all of these instances Pleroma would have an active sense.

(4) Pleroma as Meaning the Full Content or Completeness or Abundance of Various Things.

Pleroma is employed widely to designate the full contents of a container (an active use) or the liberal abundance or completeness of many things.

e.g., Euripides, Ion, 1412.

κενὸν τόδ' ἄγγος ἢ στέγει πλήρωμά τι;

"Void is this vessel, or some content doth it hide?"

Euripides, Cyclops, 209.

σχοινίνοις τ' ἐν τεύχεσι πλήρωμα τυρῶν ἔστιν;

"Is there in those rush-crates a full load of cheeses?"

Herodotus, III, 23.

ὀγδώκοντα δὲ ἔτεα ζώης πλήρωμα ἀνδρὶ μακρότατον προκέεσθαι.

"Eighty years are set forth as the maximum fulness of life for a man."

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1. Lightfoot uses the term, "the complement" in this connection, The Epistles of St. Paul, Colossians and Philemon, p. 259. But, as we have noted, by this he means "the totality." (Ibid., p. 258, footnote 1).

2. Aristides, Orations, I, 278.

In a similar fashion, Pleroma is used to denote "the fulness of the cup of Zeus,"[1] "a total sum of money,"[2] "the heap (Pleroma) of a funeral pyre,"[3] "a household as a Pleroma of a numerous kindred with no part missing that designates relationship,"[4] "the total number of friends,"[5] "the fulness of a feast,"[6] "ten, the perfect number, which is the fulfilment (Pleroma) of musical science,"[7] and "the Feast of Tabernacles which is a kind of fulfilment (Pleroma) and conclusion to all the rest."[8]

Three further references from Philo deserve special attention for their theological value. In the first he says that though the worshippers bring nothing else, in bringing themselves they offer the best sacrifice, "the truly perfect Pleroma of nobility (πλήρωμα καλοκἀγαθίας)"[9] In the second instance he says that the soul, through the triple excellence of nature, learning and practice, "becomes a Pleroma of virtues (πλήρωμα ἀρετῶν), leaving no empty room within itself

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1. Euripides, Troades, 824.
2. Aristophanes, The Wasps, 659-660.
3. Sophocles, Trachiniae, 1213.
4. Philo, De Praemiis et Poenis, xviii, 109.
5. Euripides, Ion, 664.
6. Euripides, Media, 203.
7. Philo, De Specialibus Legibus, II, xxxii, 200.
8. Ibid., II, xxxiii, 213.
9. Ibid., I, 1, 272.

where other things may enter."[1] In the third case, Philo says that faith in God is, among other things, "the fulfilment of pleasant hopes."

e.g., Philo, De Abrahamo, XLVI, 268.

μόνον οὖν ἀψευδὲς καὶ βέβαιον ἀγαθὸν ἡ πρὸς θεὸν πίστις, παρηγόρημα βίου, πλήρωμα χρηστῶν ἐλπίδων, ἀφορία μὲν κακῶν . . . .

"Faith towards God, then, is the one sure and infallible good, consolation of life, fulfilment of pleasant hopes, exclusion of ills. . . ."

Just in passing, we may note that Lightfoot mentions this reference and, of course, interprets Pleroma as passive. Further comment on Lightfoot's view, however, is held in abeyance until the next chapter when we shall consider the quite similar case of Romans xiii. 10, which affords us with a typical example of his meaning of "a passive sense," which is not the usual one.

While we do not find in Philo any theological value of Pleroma which corresponds to St. Paul's, it is interesting to observe that in Philo it does have some theological significance.

B. The Use of Pleroma in Hermetic and Gnostic Thought and Literature.

Since Hermetic and Gnostic writings and thought are closely related,[2] we may consider them together. We shall

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1. Philo, De Praemiis et Poenis, XI, 65.
2. See Dodd, The Bible and the Greeks, p. 208.

first examine the use of Pleroma in that strange body of documents generally known as Corpus Hermeticum, but designated by Reitzenstein as Poimandres.[1]

This body of manuscripts concerns the life and teachings of one, Hermes Trismegistus, a sage who lived in remote antiquity, who, after his death, was deified as the Egyptian god Thoth, identified by the Greeks with the god Hermes. The Corpus comprises approximately seventeen libelli, the numeration differing slightly with different editors. The libelli are copies of writings which originated from various authors, presumably in Egypt. Much of the alleged teaching of Hermes dealt with astrology and alchemy, which do not concern us here, but the seventeen libelli referred to are theological in nature.

The date of these writings cannot be established with preciseness and must be thought of as belonging to a certain period or century rather than decade or year. Scott says that he can date only one with any degree of certainty, the Latin Asclepius (III) around 270 A. D.[2] The dates of others must be arrived at by internal evidence, the timing of certain doctrines, etc. Most, if not all, Scott thinks, were written in the third century A. D. Some of them may have been written before the end of the second century, but probably none so early as the first

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1. For the study of the Hermetic literature, reference is made to Walter Scott, Hermetica, (4 vols.); R. Reitzenstein, Poimandres; and for general background, C. H. Dodd, The Bible and the Greeks; and S. Angus, The Religious Quests of the Graeco-Roman World, chapters XVIII and XIX.

2. Scott, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 8 ff.

century. Allowing a wide latitude, however, he broadens the possibilities to 100 B. C. - 310 A. D.[1] Dodd says that the writings were composed mainly during the second and third centuries A. D., and that while it is not impossible that some fall in the first century, it is improbable. All are, in any case, later than 100 B. C., but it is not likely that any are later than 300 A. D.[2] Reitzenstein agrees in placing the writings in the first three centuries but inclines to date them in the first and second rather than the second and third.[3] He argues that Poimandres influenced and therefore preceded the Shepherd of Hermas.[4] But while it is generally agreed that these documents belong to the Christian era, the roots of Hermeticism may go back much earlier. Angus says:

> "Let it be remembered that the Hermetic writings are but a torso of a vast literature and of a movement which Christianity sought to sweep out of its path. . . . The origins of Hermeticism go back to at least the second century B. C., and so its ideas were in operation and forming their combinations at the same time as Christianity was growing to self-consciousness in literature."[5]

The text of the documents often requires emendation. The following quotations are from the text found in Scott's Hermetica. There are five passages in which Pleroma occurs.

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1. Ibid.

2. Dodd, op. cit., Intro., pp. xiv f.

3. Reitzenstein, op. cit., pp. 2 ff. Also, Die hellenistischen Mysterienreligionen, p. 33.

4. The date of the Shepherd of Hermas is itself somewhat in doubt, but certainly is before 155 A. D., and possibly a good bit earlier. See T. W. Manson, A Companion to the Bible, p. 128.

5. Angus, op. cit., p. 331. Cf. Kennedy, St. Paul and the Mystery Religions, p. 107.

Hermetica, Libellus VI, 4a. (Scott, Vol. I, p. 168).

κἀγὼ δὲ χάριν ἔχω τῷ θεῷ, τῷ εἰς νοῦν μοι βαλόντι κἂν περὶ τῆς γνώσεως ἀπουσίας τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ, ὅτι ἀδύνατόν ἐστιν αὐτὸ ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ εἶναι. ὁ γὰρ κόσμος πλήρωμά ἐστι τῆς κακίας, ὁ δὲ θεὸς τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ, ἢ τὸ ἀγαθὸν τοῦ θεοῦ.

"And for my part, I thank God for this very thought that He has put into my mind, even the thought that the good is absent, and that it is impossible for it to be present in the cosmos. For the cosmos is a Pleroma of evil, even as God is a Pleroma of good, or the good a Pleroma of God."

Hermetica, Libellus IX, 7. (Scott, Vol. I, p. 182).

πνοὴ γάρ, οὖσα πυκνοτάτη, προτείνει τὰ ποιὰ τοῖς σώμασι μετὰ ἑνὸς πληρώματος τῆς ζωῆς.

"For the cosmic life-breath, working without intermission, conveys the qualities into the bodies with one mass of life." (i.e., uniting the bodies of the universe into one totality of life.).

Hermetica, Libellus XII, 15b. (Scott, Vol. I, p. 233).

ὁ δὲ σύμπας κόσμος οὗτος, ὁ μέγας θεός, καὶ τοῦ μείζονος εἰκών, καὶ ἡνωμένος ἐκείνῳ, καὶ σώζων τὴν τάξιν κατὰ τὴν βούλησιν τοῦ πατρός, πλήρωμά ἐστι τῆς ζωῆς . . . . πῶς ἂν οὖν δύναιτο, ὦ τέκνον, ἐν τῷ θεῷ, ἐν τῇ τοῦ πατρὸς εἰκόνι, ἐν τῷ τῆς ζωῆς πληρώματι, νεκρὰ εἶναι;

"Now this whole cosmos, which is a great god, and an image of Him who is greater, and is united with Him, and maintains its order in accordance with the Father's will, is one mass (Pleroma) of life. . . . How then, my son, could there be dead things in that which is a god, in that which is an image of the Father, in that which is one mass (Pleroma) of life?"

Hermetica, Libellus XVI, Title. (Scott, Vol. I, p. 262).

Περὶ θεοῦ, περὶ ὕλης, περὶ κακίας, περὶ εἱμαρμένης, περὶ ἡλίου, περὶ νοητῆς οὐσίας, περὶ θείας οὐσίας, περὶ ἀνθρώπου, περὶ οἰκονομίας τοῦ πληρώματος, περὶ τῶν ἑπτὰ ἀστέρων, περὶ τοῦ κατ' εἰκόνα ἀνθρώπου.

"Concerning God, concerning matter, concerning evil, concerning fate, concerning the sun, concerning the nature of mind, concerning the nature of deity, concerning man, concerning the order of the Pleroma, concerning the seven stars, concerning the one after the image of man."

Hermetica, Libellus XVI, 3. (Scott, Vol. I, pp. 264-265).

ἄρξομαι δὲ τοῦ λόγου ἔνθεν, τὸν Θεὸν ἐπικαλεσάμενος τὸν τῶν ὅλων δεσπότην καὶ ποιητὴν καὶ πατέρα καὶ περίβολον, καὶ πάντα ὄντα τὸν ἕνα καὶ ἕνα ὄντα καὶ τὰ πάντα, τῶν πάντων γὰρ τὸ πλήρωμα ἕν ἐστι καὶ ἐν ἑνί, οὐ δευτεροῦντος τοῦ ἑνός, ἀλλ' ἀμφοτέρων ἑνὸς ὄντος. . . . ἐὰν γάρ τις ἐπιχειρήσῃ τὰ πάντα καὶ ἓν δοκοῦντι καὶ ταὐτὸν εἶναι τοῦ ἑνὸς χωρίσαι, ἐκδεξάμενος τὴν τῶν πάντων προσηγορίαν ἐπὶ πλήθους, οὐκ ἐπὶ πληρώματος, ὅπερ ἐστὶν ἀδύνατον, τὸ πᾶν τοῦ ἑνὸς λύσας ἀπολέσει τὸ πᾶν· ὅπερ ἐστὶν ἀδύνατον. πάντα γὰρ ἕν εἶναι δεῖ, εἴ γε ἓν ἔστιν — ἔστι δέ, καὶ οὐδέποτε παύεται ἓν ὄντα — ἵνα μὴ τὸ πλήρωμα λυθῇ.

> "I will begin the discourse, then, by invoking God, the Ruler and Maker and Father and Encompasser of the Whole, all things being the One and the One being also all things. For the Pleroma of all things is one and in one, not two of one but both one. . . . For if anyone attempts to separate all things and One, supposing this to be possible of the One, accepting the setting forth of all things as a plurality, not a Pleroma, which could never be, separating the All from the One, he will destroy the All. But this is impossible. For it is necessary that all things be One if the One exists --- and it does exist and never ceases to exist as One --- in order that the Pleroma be not dissolved."

Regarding the active or passive sense of the word in these passages, there are some instances, as we shall have occasion to observe later also, where Pleroma has an adjectival use and means simply "full," something complete within itself, and strictly speaking should be considered neither active nor passive. Such are the cases before us. If we must decide, however, between an active and passive sense in these contexts, then a passive sense must be favored. "God is a Pleroma of good" means that He is a Being completely filled with goodness, not that He completely fills the good, which comes in the next clause. "Or good is a Pleroma of God," means that goodness is that quality completely filled by God Himself. "The whole cosmos is a Pleroma of life," means that the whole cosmos is an object or organism filled with life. "The Pleroma of all things is one," might mean either "that which fills all things," (active), or "that which all things fill," (passive), but more correctly it means neither, but simply "the totality of all things."

The theological value of Pleroma as used by the Hermeticists is very interesting indeed. As can be seen, there is no consistent meaning of the word, but it does have some

theological status, strange though it is. The question naturally arises whether there is any relationship between these uses of Pleroma and those which we find in the New Testament. Reitzenstein, characteristically, is quick to presume a relationship, namely, the indebtedness of the New Testament writers to the Hermeticists and to the Mystery religions in general.[1] Finding a connection between the terms πλάτος, βάθος, μῆκος and ὕψος used in the Hermetica and Paul's use of the same terms, though in a different order, in Ephesians iii. 18, he is led to discuss further the use of Pleroma in Ephesians iii. 19 and i. 23:

> "Auch hier (i.e., Eph. i. 23) schliesst der Verfasser an eine in der heidnischen Theologie ausgebildete Formelsprache."[2]

Citing a passage from the Hermetica[3] and another from Philo,[4] he continues:

> "Diese Stelle genügt zusammen mit Philo vollkommen, um die eigentümliche Entwicklung des Wortes in der heidnischen Theologie zu zeigen und die in den theologischen Kommentaren so beliebten Verweisungen auf Pleroma als Bemannung eines Schiffes und dergleichen überflüssig zu machen. Das Wort wird in dieser Theologie in der Regel von dem Gott gebraucht, der ἕν und πᾶν ist."[5]

Claiming further the indebtedness of the Fourth Evangelist to Hermetic writings, he says:

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1. Reitzenstein, Poimandres, pp. 247 f., and more generally in Die hellenistischen Mysterienreligionen.
2. Reitzenstein, Poimandres, p. 25.
3. Libellus XVI, 3, quoted supra, p. 18.
4. De Praemiis et Poenis, quoted supra, pp. 13 f.
5. Reitzenstein, Poimandres, pp. 25 f.

> "Ich gestehe gern, dass ich von dem Satz ὁ θεὸς πλήρωμα τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ die Evangelienstelle ὅτι ἐκ τοῦ πληρώματος αὐτοῦ πάντες ἐλάβομεν καὶ χάριν ἀντὶ χάριτος so wenig zu trennen vermag, wie von dem Satz ὁ θεὸς πλήρωμα τῆς Ζωῆς jene andere ἐν αὐτῷ Ζωὴ ἦν καὶ ἡ Ζωὴ ἦν τὸ φῶς τῶν ἀνθρώπων." [1]

We cannot here go into a discussion of the Mystery religions and their alleged kinship to Christianity, nor do we need to, for this subject has been adequately dealt with by other authors.[2] We may allow C. H. Dodd to sum up the situation for us:

> "It was into a religious world in which this kind of cross-fertilization of thought was going on that Christianity came. It started from the Jewish side, accepting the authority of the Jewish Scriptures as a divine revelation, and yet, by virtue of the original religious impulse from which it began, free to criticize, reinterpret and enlarge its Jewish heritage. Many of its early exponents were brought up in a Judaism which already, like that of Philo, had accepted contributions of thought from non-Jewish sources. Its creative theologians, Paul, the author to the Hebrews and the author of the Fourth Gospel, betray acquaintance with the generally diffused popular philosophy, partly Platonic, partly Stoic, whether this acquaintance was due to direct study of Hellenic thought or to its infiltration into their own Hellenistic Judaism. Thus the parallels between the Poimandres and the New Testament are explicable as the result of minds working under the same general influences. Within the New Testament, however, such influences are always secondary. The regulative motive is that supplied by the originating impulse of Christianity itself."[3]

Turning now our attention to the use of the term, Pleroma, by the Gnostics, the question which confronts us at

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1. Ibid.

2. H. A. A. Kennedy, St. Paul and the Mystery Religions; S. Angus, The Mystery Religions, and The Religious Quests of the Graeco-Roman World; William Manson, Jesus the Messiah, chapter one and Appendix D; Dodd, The Bible and the Greeks; and others. It is generally agreed that Reitzenstein and his school went entirely too far in their enthusiasm to claim the indebtedness of Christianity to the Mystery cults.

3. Dodd, op. cit., pp. 247 f.

the outset is that of date, for the known use of the term by Valentinus, Ptolemy, Basilides, Marcus and others belongs to the second and third centuries A. D. What value can this be to a discovery of the earlier use made by the heretics at Colossae, which we judge from St. Paul's Epistle? It will be the writer's contention which he hopes to support, if not with conclusive proof, at least with substantial evidence, that the later use reflects much light upon the earlier employment of the term, in that Valentinus, Basilides, Ptolemy, Marcus and the others most likely were not the originators of the concept of the Pleroma, as they conceived it, but were simply building labyrinthic superstructures upon much earlier doctrines which they inherited.

Our chief knowledge of the use of Pleroma by the Gnostics comes from the refutations by the early Church Fathers.[1] The term occurs frequently in the extant Gnostic document, Pistis Sophia, used variously.[2] In this thesis we shall depend mainly upon information from Irenaeus and Hippolytus. According to

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1. The chief anti-Gnostic apologists are Ignatius, Irenaeus, Hippolytus, Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria and Origen. The chief extant writings of the Gnostics themselves are Pistis Sophia and The Epistle of Ptolemy to Flora. Other fragments of writings are found in G. R. S. Mead's Fragments of a Faith Forgotten. Archaeological findings of the Gnostics are described and pictured in C. W. King's The Gnostics and Their Remains. Among some of the more modern treatises on Gnosticism may be mentioned: H. L. Mansel, The Gnostic Heresies; E. Burton, Bampton Lectures, 1829, (still of much value); Harnack, History of Dogma, Vol. I; Gwatkin, Early Church History, Vol. II; E. F. Scott, Gnosticism; Wilhelm Bousset, Hauptprobleme der Gnosis; S. Angus, The Religious Quests of the Graeco-Roman World, chaps. XX and XXI; and Latourette, A History of the Expansion of Christianity, Vol. I. Of course there are many other valuable sources.

2. See Appendix B.

these sources, we find that to these Gnostics Pleroma signified the locality where the Deity and His subordinate powers had their abode, sometimes denoting the place and at other times the aggregate of the powers.[1] The view was that God emanated other powers, somewhat as light emits rays, or, according to another analogy, as the mind sends forth thoughts. The metaphysical significance of a given power depended upon its distance from the original source.

The Pleroma of Valentinus[2] was perhaps the most elaborate of all the schemes of the Gnostics. Here it is sufficient to note that his Pleroma was divided into three parts, an Ogdoad, a Decad and a Duodecad, and that the total number of Aeons, as signified by the divisions, was thirty. The thirtieth, Sophia, fell from the Pleroma (though later she was rescued and returned), and it was from her offspring in her fallen condition that the world was later formed.

One of the earliest of the heretics was Simon Magus. Much that is legendary has woven itself into his biography and he cannot be dated with exactness. If he is to be identified with the Simon, "the Power of God which is called Great," who confronted Philip, Peter and John,[3] then he would date from the time of the Apostles. But we cannot be positive of this identity. In any case, we can be sure that there was a man named Simon

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1. Irenaeus, Against Heresies, Book I, i, 3; ii, 4; and generally. (The Writings of Irenaeus in The Ante-Nicene Christian Library).

2. See Appendix A.

3. The Acts, viii. 9-24.

Magus who was one of the earliest of the heretics with whom the Church had to deal. Did Simon use the term Pleroma? We cannot be absolutely certain, but the following facts strongly suggest the possibility.

(1) The Church Fathers speak of him as "the progenitor" of the heresies:

> "I have also related how they (the Gnostics) think and teach that creation at large was formed after the image of their invisible Pleroma, and what they hold respecting the Demiurge, declaring at the same time the doctrine of Simon Magus of Samaria, their progenitor, and of all those Gnostics who are sprung from him, and noticed the points of difference between them, their several doctrines, and the order of their succession, while I set forth all those heresies which have been originated by them. I showed, moreover, that all these heretics, taking their rise from Simon, have introduced impious and irreligious doctrines into this life."[1]

We assume that Irenaeus and the others do not mean that Simon was the originator of Gnosticism as such, which has roots much earlier, but that he was the father of the heresies which the Christian Church had to confront.

(2) Three quotations suggest that Simon may have used the term. The first is from Epiphanius, writing about the middle of the fourth century. He says that Simon invented certain names for principalities and powers, and that the chief tenets of his doctrine were:

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1. Irenaeus, op. cit., II, Preface. Cf. I, xxiii, 2; xxiv, 1; xxvii, 1, 4. Burton, op. cit., p. 87, gives references to other Fathers.

> ". . . . that the law was not from God, but from an inferior power; and that the Prophets were not from the good God, but from different powers. He assigned these according to his own fancy, the Law to one power, David to another, Isaiah to another, Ezekiel to another, and each of the Prophets to one particular director. He said that all these belonged to the inferior power, and were out of the Pleroma; and that whoever believed the Old Testament was liable to death."[1]

While we cannot be sure that Epiphanius is quoting Simon rather than adopting the term from his own later vantage point, it is to be observed that he is quite correct in all of the other information given in this context, according to the Church Fathers. Epiphanius doubtless drew much of his information from more ancient documents.

In the second quotation, originating some two-hundred years earlier than the above, the author of The Recognitions (pseudo-Clementine) describes Simon's idea of the higher world. The term Pleroma is not used, but the description sounds very much like the Hermetic and Gnostic concept of the Pleroma:

> "There must be some place (according to Simon) which is beyond the world, or without it, in which there is neither heaven, nor earth, lest their shadow should produce darkness even there. For this reason, since there are neither any bodies in it, nor darkness from bodies, it must be an immensity of light; and consider what sort of light that must be, which has no successions of darkness. For if the light of the sun fills the whole of our world, how vast do you suppose is that incorporeal and infinite light? It is undoubtedly so great, that the light of our sun would seem, when compared with it, to be darkness and not light."[2]

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1. Epiphanius, Contra Haereses, xxi, 4.
2. Clementine (pseudo), The Recognitions, II, 61.

We do not lay too much emphasis on this quotation, however, because of its pseudo author and the general tenor of the document.

In the third quotation, if we may anticipate for a moment, Simon holds a concept which is quite basic to the original thought of Pleroma as used by the Hermeticists and Gnostics, namely, that God contains all things:

> "'And the Spirit of God was wafted over the water,' means, says Simon, the Spirit which contains all things in itself, and is an image of the indefinite power about which Simon speaks --- 'an image from an incorruptible form, that alone reduces all things into order.' For this power that is wafted over the water, being begotten, he says, from an incorruptible form alone, reduces all things into order."[1]

(3) The teachings of Simon resemble very closely those of the later Gnostics who used the term, Pleroma, freely. It is not plain whether Simon claimed that he himself was the supreme God or only "the power of God that is called Great." In any case, he taught that there were other powers besides himself.[2] According to Hippolytus, he was the author of a work called The Great Announcement (Ἀπόφασις Μεγάλη). This gives a concept of the powers which resembles in nuclear form the elaborate Pleromata of Valentinus, Ptolemy and the others. According to this work, the principle of all things is a certain power which is spoken of as Fire, and also under the name of Silence. This infinite power is the root of all things.

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1. Hippolytus, Refutation of All Heresies, Book VI, ix. (The Writings of Hippolytus is The Ante-Nicene Christian Library).

2. Ibid., VI, vii and viii; Irenaeus, op. cit., I, xxiii, 1; and Clementine (pseudo) The Recognitions, II, 38-39.

It has a two-fold energy, one apparent and one hidden. The world was created by that energy of Fire which is apparent. From this infinite power was put forth three pairs of principles which he also called roots, νοῦς and ἐπίνοια ; φωνή and ὄνομα; and λογισμός and ἐνθύμησις. These six, together with the first, which he also divided into two parts, made a total of eight powers, or principles, or roots. This resembles very closely the scheme of Valentinus whose Pleroma had a top region of eight powers, the Ogdoad. It is to be noted also that Simon had his powers arranged in pairs similar to the later systems. Further, according to Simon, it was the fallen Ἔννοια who begat evil angels and powers, which in turn were responsible for the creation of the material world.[1]

Other similarities might be mentioned, but enough have been noted to show that whether Simon actually called his upper world a Pleroma, his system was basically the same as that of the later Gnostics.

We pass on to another of the early heretics, Cerinthus. Though later than Paul, he confronted the Apostle John at Ephesus according to the authority of Polycarp.[2] Again we ask the question, did Cerinthus use the term "Pleroma"? Here also we cannot be dogmatic, but the following facts suggest that he did.

(1) His doctrines are thoroughly Gnostic in character

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1. Irenaeus, op. cit., I, xxiii, 2; Hippolytus, op. cit., VI, xiv.

2. Irenaeus, op. cit., III, iii, 4.

so that we have no hesitation is classifying him as a Gnostic. His teachings, like those of Simon, resemble closely those of later days. Thus he differentiated between the supreme Power and the power which created the world, the latter being far below, completely shut off from God and totally ignorant of Him. The prophets were influenced by the angels of a low order, and the law was given by one of them. The law and the prophets were really counter to the will of God and not to be obeyed. He had a docetic view of Jesus Christ, holding that Jesus was the human son of Joseph and Mary while Christ was the Son of God, the former being passible and the latter impassible, the latter descending upon Jesus at His baptism and returning again before the crucifixion. Christ came to "enlighten" men, not to suffer for them.[1]

(2) By way of the axiom, "Things equal to the same thing are equal to each other," we can argue that Cerinthus did use the term. In the following passage, Irenaeus describes the teachings of Cerinthus thus:

> "Moreover, after His baptism, Christ descended upon Him in the form of a dove from the Supreme Ruler, and then He proclaimed the unknown Father and performed miracles. But at last Christ departed from Jesus, and then Jesus suffered and rose again, while Christ remained impassible, inasmuch as He was a spiritual being."[2]

In another passage, Irenaeus is describing certain heresies and, although the name of Cerinthus is not mentioned, the

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1. For all this and more, see Irenaeus, op. cit., I, xxvi, 1; Hippolytus, op. cit., VII, xxi and X, xvii; and Epiphanius, op. cit., xxviii.

2. Irenaeus, op. cit., I, xxvi, 1.

teachings are the same as in the paragraph just given, and the term, Pleroma, does occur:

> "But there are some who say that Jesus was merely a receptacle of Christ, upon whom the Christ, as a dove, descended from above, and that when He had declared the unnameable Father, He entered into the Pleroma in an incomprehensible and invisible manner."[1]

In still a third passage, the term is definitely associated with the teachings of Cerinthus and the Nicolaitans:

> "John, the disciple of the Lord, preaches this faith, and seeks, by the proclamation of the Gospel, to remove that error which by Cerinthus had been disseminated among man, and a long time previously by those termed Nicolaitans, who are an offset of that 'knowledge' falsely so-called, that he might confound them, and persuade them that there is but one God, who made all things by His Word; and not, as they allege, that the Creator was one, but the Father of the Lord another; and that the Son of the Creator was, forsooth, one, but the Christ from above another, who also continued impassible, descending upon Jesus, the Son of the Creator, and flew back again into His Pleroma."[2]

As with Epiphanius, we cannot be sure that Irenaeus has not simply appropriated the term from his later vantage point to describe the teachings of Cerinthus, but there is a strong possibility that the latter himself used it. Lightfoot, who examines this case, thinks it probable.[3]

However, whether or not we are warranted in concluding that Simon Magus and Cerinthus may have used the term, there are other factors, just as important, which suggest that Pleroma was already a current religious term when St. Paul wrote. It was doubtless more employed in certain cults than

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1. Ibid., III, xvi, 1.

2. Ibid., III, xi, 1.

3. Lightfoot, The Epistles of St. Paul, Colossians and Philemon, pp. 111 f., and 264 f.

others, but had also a rather wide currency in the general religious philosophy of the times. In support of this, we present three observations.

(1) The roots of Gnosticism go very deep and the scope of this movement was much greater than we might gather from its encounter with Christianity. It is customary because of the conflict with Christianity to think of incipient Gnosticism as existing in the first century and its more fully developed form in the second and third centuries. But the doctrines of "Gnosis" had a much longer history and wider significance.[1]

(2) The Church Fathers specifically state that the Gnostics against whom they were writing drew heavily upon the teachings of Plato, Pythagoras, Aristotle, Zeno, and other philosophers, but especially the first two.[2] Plato's doctrine of two worlds, the real and the copy, was readily employed by the Gnostics. But reasoning from the copy to the real led to all sorts of absurdities. One example will suffice:

> "Then, also, they (the Valentinians) say that the passions which she (the fallen Sophia) endured were indicated by the Lord upon the cross. Thus, when He said, 'My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?' He simply showed that Sophia was deserted by the light and was restrained by Horus (Fence) from making any advance forward. Her anguish, again, was indicated when He said,

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1. On this see Bousset, op. cit., p. 6; Harnack, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 244; Latourette, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 338; and other sources.

2. Irenaeus, op. cit., especially II, xiv, 1-6; also II, vii-viii; and I, vii, 2; viii, 2; Hippolytus, op. cit., VI, ii; xvi-xix; xxiv; xxix; xxxii; and xlvii.

> 'My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death;' her fear by the words, 'Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me;' and her perplexity, too, when He said, 'And what I shall say, I know not.'"[1]

Pythagoras, in keeping with the characteristic Hellenistic attempt to reduce all things to a single principle, conceived a system of numbers, reducing all things to Monad, or ἕν. Monad gave birth to Duad, Duad to Triad, and so forth, up to Pentad, the perfect number which includes all the others. Eleven, twelve, and the succeeding are not separate entities but repetitions of the preceding. Further, he divided the world into twelve parts, each part of the twelve into thirty to correspond to the number of days in the month, each of the thirty into sixty ad infinitum, but the aggregate of all these portions constituted a year. That he should thus jumble matter and time was no worry to him.

Also connected with his system, though one need not try to explain it in terms of consistency, was his teaching that all solid bodies were generated from "incorporeal essences."[2] These he paired as follows:

(Males)		(Females)
Limited	----	Unlimited
Odd	----	Even
Unity	----	Plurality
Right	----	Left
Male	----	Female
Rest	----	Motion
Straight	----	Crooked
Light	----	Darkness
Good	----	Evil
Square	----	Oblong

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1. Irenaeus, op. cit., I, viii, 2; Cf. I, vii, 2. For his refutation of the idea, II, vii-viii.

2. Ibid., II, xiv, 6; Hippolytus, op. cit., VI, xix; and Aristotle, Metaphysics, I, v.

As we compare these teachings with those of Valentinus, we cannot help noticing the striking resemblances, i.e., the reduction of everything to an ultimate, Monad, or in the case of Valentinus, Bythus; the evolution of other alleged essences from this; the numbers emphasized by Pythagoras, 10, 12 and 30, corresponding to Valentinus's Pleroma which, as we have noted, had, in addition to an Ogdoad, a Decad and a Duodecad, the aggregate of the Aeons thus being thirty; and the pairing of the "incorporeal essences" resembling the pairing of the Aeons in the Valentinian system.

Of course we are not warranted in presuming that because the later Gnostics drew heavily upon Plato, Pythagoras and other philosophers, the use of Pleroma therefore goes back to these sources. We have no indications that Plato, Pythagoras and the others had any such understanding of the term. But it does show that at the earlier age, several centuries before the Christian era, both serious and wild and fanciful systems of metaphysics were in vogue, and the rudiments of the later Gnostic Pleroma were already present, though it is not certain just when the term Pleroma began to be attached to them. But all of this lends weight to the possibility that Pleroma was a pre-Christian term and generally current when Paul wrote his Epistle to the Colossians.

(3) The original basic idea behind the term, as used of God, was doubtless His absolute perfection. The concept of space played an important role in the Hermetic and Gnostic thought of the Deity's perfection. He was One without limit, bound by nothing, who contained all things but was not contained.

The following passage from Irenaeus is only one of several which he gives using the Gnostics's own concept of what they mean by Pleroma to show their inconsistency and thus to refute their claims:

> "It is proper, then, that I should begin with the first and most important head, that is, God the Creator who made the heaven and the earth and all that is therein. He created all things, since He is the only God, the only Lord, the only Creator, the only Father, alone containing all things, and Himself commanding all things into existence. For how can there be any other Fulness, or Principle, or Power, or God above Him, since it is a matter of necessity that God, the Pleroma of all these, should contain all things in His immensity, and should be contained by no one? But if there is anything beyond Him, He is not then the Pleroma of all, nor does He contain all. For that which they declare to be beyond Him will be wanting to the Pleroma, or to that God who is above all things. But that which is wanting, and falls in any way short, is not the Pleroma of all things."[1]

We shall leave this idea for the moment, but shall return to it presently in the conclusion of this chapter.

C. The Use of Pleroma by Ignatius.[2]

In the salutations of two of his Epistles, Ignatius uses Pleroma in such a way as to throw valuable light upon Apostolic language. Some of the letters under the name of Ignatius appear to be the work of a later century, but there can be little doubt about the genuineness of the seven

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1. Irenaeus, op. cit., II, i, 1, 2. Cf. Ibid., i, 5; iii, 1; viii, 2; and III, xi, 1.

2. The dates of Ignatius are not absolutely fixed, but most critics place him during the reign of Trajan, 98-117 A. D. Eusebius (Historia Ecclesiastica, iii. 36) fixes the date of his martyrdom in the tenth year of Trajan, 108 A. D.

mentioned by Eusebius[1] from which our quotations come.

Ignatius, Epistle to the Ephesians, the Salutation.

Ἰγνάτιος, ὁ καὶ Θεοφόρος, τῇ εὐλογημένῃ ἐν μεγέθει Θεοῦ πατρὸς πληρώματι. . . . τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ τῇ ἀξιομακαρίστῳ, τῇ οὔσῃ ἐν Ἐφέσῳ τῆς Ἀσίας, πλεῖστα ἐν Ἰησοῦ Χριστῷ καὶ ἐν ἀμώμῳ χαρᾷ χαίρειν.

"Ignatius, also called Theophorus, to the (church) blessed with greatness by the Pleroma of God the Father. . . . to the church worthy of blessedness which is at Ephesus in Asia, abundant greeting in Jesus Christ and in blameless joy."

Ignatius, Epistle to the Trallians, the Salutation.

Ἰγνάτιος, ὁ καὶ Θεοφόρος, ἠγαπημένῃ Θεῷ, πατρὶ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, ἐκκλησίᾳ ἁγίᾳ τῇ οὔσῃ ἐν Τράλλεσιν τῆς Ἀσίας . . . . ἣν καὶ ἀσπάζομαι ἐν τῷ πληρώματι ἐν ἀποστολικῷ χαρακτῆρι καὶ εὔκομαι πλεῖστα χαίρειν.

"Ignatius, also called Theophorus, to the holy church which is at Tralles in Asia, beloved by God the Father of Jesus Christ. . . . which (church) also I greet in the Pleroma in Apostolic fashion, and I bid you abundant greeting."

Lightfoot mentions these two quotations from Ignatius. Concerning their significance, we may simply quote him:

"The use of the word is not very different in the Ignatian letters (i.e., not very different from the use in the Prologue to the Fourth Gospel and Ephesians). St. Ignatius greets this same Ephesian Church, to which St. Paul and St. John successively here addressed the language already quoted, as 'blessed in greatness by the

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1. Eusebius, op. cit., iii. 36. The seven he mentions are the letters to the churches of Ephesus, Magnesia, Tralles, Rome, Philadelphia, and Smyrna, and the letter to Polycarp.

> Pleroma of God the Father,' i.e., by graces imparted from the Pleroma. To the Trallians again he sends a greeting 'in the Pleroma,' where the word denotes the sphere of Divine gifts and operations, so that ἐν τῷ πληρώματι is almost equivalent to ἐν τῷ Κυρίῳ or ἐν τῷ πνεύματι."[1]

It should be observed that in the second passage, Ignatius says that he greets the Trallians "in the Pleroma in Apostolic fashion," which suggests that this form of greeting may have been used more than the extant writings suggest. However, so far as our record goes, Ignatius used the term only the two times.

D. The Use of Pleroma in The Odes of Solomon.

In the nineteenth Ode, verse five, the equivalent of Pleroma occurs (in Syriac) in a somewhat theological sense. A cup of milk from the Father is offered to the world by the Holy Spirit:

> (verse 5) "And He gave the mixture to the world without their knowing:
> And those who take (it) are in the fulness of the right (hand)."[2]

Harris and Mingana date this Ode in the second century A. D., or even the first.[3] A part of it is quoted by Eusebius, Theodoret, and Lactantius.[4] Some of the Odes are quoted in

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1. Lightfoot, The Epistles of St. Paul, Colossians and Philemon, p. 264. In line with Lightfoot's concluding remark, we might compare other salutations from Ignatius: To the church at Rome, "which also I greet in the name Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father;" to the church at Magnesia, "blessed in the grace of God the Father by Christ Jesus;" to the church at Smyrna, "filled (πεπληρωμένῃ) with faith and love and lacking in no grace." Cf. also his Epistle to the Magnesians, xiv, "I know that you are full of God (Εἰδώς, ὅτι θεοῦ γέμετε)."

2. From Harris and Mingana, The Odes and Psalms of Solomon, Vol. II, pp. 298-299.

3. Ibid., p. 61.

4. Ibid.

Pistis Sophia, but not this particular one.

The metaphor may seem crude to our occidental minds, but such language as "the Divine Word, the milk of the Father," was frequently used by the early Church writers, especially by Clement of Alexandria.[1]

We cannot base very much value on this one occurrence in the Odes of Solomon, but it does help to corroborate our supposition that the term had a wide range of use.

E. The Possible Trend in the Development of Pleroma in a Theological Sense.

Can we now come to any conclusions as to how Pleroma came to be used in a theological sense, especially as referring to God? I believe that we can trace the development with a reasonable degree of accuracy, though the exact time it came into such use is unknown. I suggest that there were four stages in its development from its earliest use in a theological sense to its later employment by the Gnostics against whom the Church Fathers wrote.

(1) As we have already stated, the basic idea behind Pleroma, as used of God, was doubtless the concept of a Deity who was all-perfect, who was limited by nothing, "who contained all things but was not contained," whose Presence and power were all-pervasive. The concept ranged all the way from a spiritual idea to a purely physical and pantheistic one.

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1. For such examples see Ibid., "Expository notes," pp. 304-305.

We have already commented on how this was a basic idea in Hermetic and Gnostic thought and how Irenaeus refuted the Gnostics by their own concept of the Pleroma.[1] But we can also trace this idea of God's filling all things to much earlier and much wider sources. In Hebrew thought, God filled all things by His Presence, His Spirit, His glory and His Wisdom.[2] Philo, who bridges the gap between Hebraic and Hellenistic thought, speaks frequently of the omnipresence of God, or His filling all things by means of His Spirit, or the Logos, or Wisdom, or His Providence, or His Powers.[3] Also, we often find in Philo's writings some form of that familiar phrase, "containing all things but not contained."

> "There is a third signification (of place), in keeping with which God Himself is called a place, by reason of His containing all things and being contained by nothing whatever, and being a place for all to flee into, and because He is Himself the space which holds Him; for He is that which He Himself has occupied, and nought encloses Him but Himself. I, mark you, am not a place but in a place; and each thing likewise that exists; for that which is contained is different from that which contains it, and the Deity, being contained by nothing, is of necessity Itself Its own place."[4]

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1. Supra, p. 33.

2. I Kings viii. 27; Jeremiah xxiii. 24; Psalm cxxxix; Isaiah vi. 1; The Wisdom of Solomon, i. 6-7; viii. 1; and many other places.

3. Philo, Legum Allegoria, III, ii, 4; De Gigantibus, vi. 27-28; De Specialibus Legibus, I, iii, 18; De Vita Mosis, II, xliii, 238; and many other places.

4. Philo, De Somniis, I, xi, 63-64. Likewise, see De Migratione Abrahami, xxxii, 181-182; xxxv, 192; De Confusione Linguarum, xxvii, 136; and Legum Allegoria, I, xiv, 44.

Turning to Hellenistic thought in general, we find that the idea of the "universal sympathy" of all things was commonplace. God pervaded the universe as Reason, or Fire, or Spirit, or by some other means. Two examples must suffice:

> "He (God) is, however, the Artificer of the Universe and, as it were, the Father of all, both in general and in that particular part of Him which is all-pervading, and which is called many names according to its various powers."[1]

> "In whatever direction you turn, you will see God coming to meet you; nothing is void of Him; He Himself fills all His work."[2]

Tied in with this was the idea that the universe had no empty space but was completely full. According to Diogenes Laertius, Posidonius taught:

> "The whole cosmos has no empty space within it but forms one united whole. This is a necessary result of the sympathy and tension which binds together things in heaven and earth."[3]

Speaking of this concept in the Graeco-Roman world, Wilfred L. Knox says:

> "It was again a general conception of the age that the whole cosmos was completely 'full'; there was no vacuum in it. But the material world was always giving out and taking in; fulness was properly a quality that belonged to God alone."[4]

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1. Diogenes Laertius, vii, 147. Cf. vii, 137-138 and i, 127. Cf. also Plato's conception of "the All," Timaeus, 29-35.

2. Seneca, De Beneficiis, IV, viii, 2. Cf. Aristotle, De Partibus Animalium, I, v; and De Animalibus, I, 27.

3. Diogenes Laertius, vii, 140. Posidonius's dates are roughly 130-50 B. C. He exercised a mighty influence. Cicero was his student and admirer.

4. Knox, St. Paul and the Church of the Gentiles, p. 163.

(2) The second stage, though not chronologically, was the belief in dualism. The roots of dualism run deep into Egyptian, Persian and Babylonian sources and Hermeticism and Gnosticism were grounded in it. The doctrine arose, of course, from the endeavor to explain the presence of evil in the world in view of a good and holy Creator. When the answer was given that evil was inherent in matter itself, the way was open for the widest variety of speculations as to how it came into being. It is evident that this thought is directly opposed to the one above regarding the immanence of God.

(3) The third stage resulted from the above conflict of ideas. The mundane universe was severed from God and He became totally transcendent. His "fulness" became localized in a higher region.[1] He was still thought of as complete and perfect; nevertheless materiality and the Pleroma became two entirely different spheres. How then did the world come into being? God had emanated other powers, so the theory ran, which in turn had emitted other powers, and so on in a condescending hierarchy until at last some power, far removed from the Pleroma and tainted with darkness himself, had created the material universe.

(4) Stage four was simply the attempt of the Gnostics to append Christianity to their existing systems and to absorb it. They were willing to compromise and give Christ a place in their scheme of redemption, but He was to be only one of the

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1. According to Diogenes Laertius, vii, 137, the Stoics taught that "by heaven is meant the extreme circumference or ring in which the Deity has His seat." This is very similar to the concept of a localized Pleroma.

Aeons in their hierarchy, a low one at that, and His redemption was to be limited to forgiveness of sins, not deliverance from the hostile cosmic powers which, they alleged, held men in their grip.[1]

If we are correct in our contention that the term, Pleroma, was one of rather widespread use of the perfection of Deity, it is reasonable to suppose that this influenced St. Paul and the Fourth Evangelist in their choice of the word to convey the thought of "the fulness of God," "the fulness in Christ," and the fulness imparted to believers. We would emphasize that whatever the foreign connotation of the term, these New Testament writers filled it with their own meaning and made it serve their own purpose. Outside uses were quite secondary.

The main point at hand is that in all probability, Pleroma as a religious concept did not originate with St. Paul or the Fourth Evangelist or with their contemporaries, but was a term handed down from pre-Christian times.

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1. See Appendix C.

CHAPTER II.

THE BIBLICAL USES OF PLEROMA.

(Excepting Colossians and Ephesians).[1]

A. The Use of Pleroma in the Septuagint (LXX).

So far as our study is concerned, not a great deal of value can be derived from the use of Pleroma in the LXX, for two reasons: (a) The word is used purely in a literal sense; and (b) as in some cases already noted,[2] it has a meaning more like an adjective than a noun, the equivalent of πλήρης, and strictly speaking should be considered as neither "that which fills," nor "that which is filled," but simply as a word to denote "the whole or total." There is one exception, Ecclesiastes iv. 6 (see below), where it does seem to have an active sense.[3]

There are twelve occurrences of the word in the LXX, a translation of מְלֹא . The following are samples.

Psalm xxiv. 1. (LXX xxiii. 1).

Τοῦ Κυρίου ἡ γῆ καὶ τὸ πλήρωμα αὐτῆς.

"The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof."

Psalm xcvi. 11. (LXX xcv. 11).

σαλευθήτω ἡ θάλασσα καὶ τὸ πλήρωμα αὐτῆς.

"Let the sea be moved and the fulness thereof."

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1. The use of Pleroma in these Epistles will be considered in chaps. III and IV.

2. Supra, p. 19.

3. Fritzsche, op. cit., pp. 470 f., gives Pleroma an active sense in all cases in the LXX. If a choice has to be made, then he is doubtless correct. For instance, "The earth and the fulness thereof" means "the earth and all that fills it, all forms of life, water, clouds, man-made constructions etc."

Jeremiah xlvii. 2. (LXX xxix. 2).

Ἰδοὺ ὕδατα ἀναβαίνει ἀπὸ Βορρᾶ, καὶ ἔσται εἰς χειμάρρουν κατακλύζοντα, καὶ κατακλύσει γῆν καὶ τὸ πλήρωμα αὐτῆς.

"Behold, waters come up from the North, and they shall become an overwhelming flood, and shall overwhelm the land and the fulness thereof."

Ecclesiastes iv. 6.

Ἀγαθὸν πλήρωμα δρακὸς ἀναπαύσεως ὑπὲρ πληρώματα δύο δρακῶν μόχθου καὶ προαιρέσεως πνεύματος.

"Better is a handful of rest than two handfuls of toil and vexation of spirit."[1]

Here, Pleroma refers to the "contents" of the hand, "the filling substance," and hence would have an active sense. The meaning is simply "a hand completely full," or "a hand completely filled," but if the word be regarded as a noun, which it is, it could only have an active sense.[2] Yet even here, it is really the equivalent of πλήρης, just as St. Mark uses the two words in the same context to convey precisely the same thought.[3]

Perhaps the chief value of the Old Testament toward our study, whether we consider the LXX or the Hebrew text, does not lie in the use of Pleroma or its equivalent, but in

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1. Other passages in the LXX containing Pleroma are: I Chro. xvi. 32; Psalms l. 12. (LXX xlix. 12); lxxxix. 11. (LXX lxxxviii. 11); xcviii. 7. (LXX xcvii. 7); Jer. viii. 16. (LXX the same); Eze. xii. 19; xix. 7; xxx. 12.

2. We might compare the quite similar cases of the "basketfuls of fragments," Mark vi. 43 and viii. 20.

3. Mark viii. 19-20.

the general theological concept of a God whose Spirit was omnipresent, whose gracious Providence was over all, and whose glory filled all the earth; πλήρης πᾶσα ἡ γῆ τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ.[1]

B. The Use of Pleroma in the Gospels.

Pleroma is used three times in the Gospel of Mark, once in the Gospel of Matthew in a parallel account, and once in the Fourth Gospel, in the Prologue.

(1) The New Patch on the Old Garment.

Mark ii. 21.

οὐδεὶς ἐπίβλημα ῥάκους ἀγνάφου ἐπιῤῥάπτει ἐπὶ ἱμάτιον παλαιόν· εἰ δὲ μή, αἴρει τὸ πλήρωμα ἀπ' αὐτοῦ, τὸ καινὸν τοῦ παλαιοῦ, καὶ χεῖρον σχίσμα γίνεται.

"No one seweth a piece of undressed cloth on an old garment; else the [redacted] piece filled in taketh away from it, the new from the old, and a worse rent is made."

Matthew ix. 16.

οὐδεὶς δὲ ἐπιβάλλει ἐπίβλημα ῥάκους ἀγνάφου ἐπὶ ἱματίῳ παλαιῷ· αἴρει γὰρ τὸ πλήρωμα αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ τοῦ ἱματίου, καὶ χεῖρον σχίσμα γίνεται.

"No one putteth a piece of undressed cloth upon an old garment; for the piece filled in tears away from the garment and a worse rent is made."

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1. LXX, Isaiah vi. 3.

The Authorized Version renders Pleroma in these passages respectively as "the new piece that filled it up," and "that which is put in to fill it up." The American Standard Version (Revised) renders it in both cases as "that which should fill it up," while the Revised Standard Version calls it simply "the patch." If regarded as a piece that fills, that makes the garment complete, then it would have an active sense. But the word could mean, according to the translation given, "the piece filled in," which would be passive.

But this is not Lightfoot's meaning of the word as passive, either here or elsewhere. To him, it is passive because it means "the completeness" and not any such idea as "the new piece that filled it up." His translation is, "The completeness takes away from the garment, the new completeness from the old garment."[1]

> "The statement is thus thrown into the form of a direct paradox, the very completeness making the garment more imperfect than before."[2]

Concerning Lightfoot's view, Robinson makes the following comment which we quote at length because of its pertinence:

> "The straits to which Lightfoot is put by this theory (i.e., that Pleroma is always passive) may be illustrated from his interpretation of the word Pleroma in Mark ii. 21, the saying about the new patch on the old garment. . . . Our old translators rendered Pleroma, 'the piece that filleth it up,' taking Pleroma in the sense of 'the supplement.' It cannot be denied that this gives an admirable meaning in this place. Perhaps

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1. Lightfoot, The Epistles of St. Paul, Colossians and Philemon, p. 259.

2. Ibid.

> a stricter writer would have said ἀναπλήρωμα, for ἀναπληροῦν seems to differ from πληροῦν in the same way as 'to fill up' differs from 'to fill:' it suggests the supply of a deficiency, rather than the filling of what is quite empty to start with. Apart from this, which is perhaps somewhat of a refinement, we might render the words, 'the supplement taketh therefrom, to wit, the new from the old.'
>
> "But Lightfoot boldly refuses the obvious explanation, and, insisting on his theory, interprets Pleroma as 'the completeness which results from the patch.' 'The completeness takes away from the garment, the new completeness from the old garment.' We must hesitate long before we dissent from the interpretations of so great an expositor: but we are sorely tempted to ask if there is not a nearer way to the truth than this."[1]

The chief thing to be said against Lightfoot's interpretation is that it is against the natural meaning of the word in its context. It is not the "completeness" that makes the σχίσμα worse but the new patch. Completeness does not make a σχίσμα, but rather a new piece of unshrunken cloth.

Fritzsche gives Pleroma an active meaning in these passages.[2]

(2) The Baskets Full of Fragments.

All four of the Gospels tell of the feeding of the five thousand, but St. Mark is the only one to use Pleroma in this connection, as well as regarding the leven of the Pharisees when Jesus reminded the disciples of both the five thousand and the four thousand (see below). The other Evangelists avoid the word, apparently deliberately, recognizing

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1. Robinson, The Expositor (1898), pp. 243 f., and St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians, p. 256. We shall make a comment about Lightfoot's "passive sense" a little later when we consider Romans xiii. 10.

2. Fritzsche, op. cit., p. 473.

St. Mark's Greek as not the best at this point. Robinson says:

> "'Basketfuls' is a harsh plural. . . . On no theory of the meaning of Pleromata could it ever have been tolerable to a Greek ear. If St. Mark wrote it so, the other Evangelists were fully justified in altering it, even though the later copyists were not."[1]

Matthew substitutes πλήρεις while Luke and the Fourth Evangelist phrase the thought differently.[2]

> Mark vi. 43.
>
> καὶ ἦραν κλάσματα, δώδεκα κοφίνων πληρώματα,
> καὶ ἀπὸ τῶν ἰχθύων.
>
> "And they took up twelve baskets full of the fragments and of the fishes."[3]

> Mark viii. 19-20.
>
> ὅτε τοὺς πέντε ἄρτους ἔκλασα εἰς τοὺς πεντα-
> κισχιλίους πόσους κοφίνους πλήρεις κλασμάτων
> ἤρατε; λέγουσιν αὐτῷ, Δώδεκα. Ὅτε δὲ τοὺς
> ἑπτὰ εἰς τοὺς τετρακισχιλίους, πόσων σπυρίδων
> πληρώματα κλασμάτων ἤρατε; καὶ λέγουσιν
> αὐτῷ, Ἑπτά.
>
> "When I brake the five loaves among the five thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up? They say unto Him, Twelve. And when the seven among the four thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up? And they say unto Him, Seven."

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1. Robinson, The Expositor (1898), p. 249, footnote 1; and St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians, p. 259, footnote 1.

2. Matt. xiv. 20 and xv. 37; Luke ix. 17; and John vi. 13.

3. Literally, "basketfuls." The American Standard Version (Revised) so translates it.

Lightfoot, contending here for a passive sense, as usual, says regarding these passages:

> "In Mark vi. 43, the right reading is καὶ ἦραν κλασμάτων δώδεκα κυφίνους πληρώματα i.e., 'full' or 'complete measures,' where the apposition to κοφίνους obviates the temptation to explain πληρώματα as 'ea quae implent.' On the other hand, in Mark viii. 20, πόσων σπυρίδων πληρώματα κλασμάτων ἤρατε; this would be the prima facie explanation; comp. Eccles. iv. 6. But it is objectionable to give an active sense to Pleroma under any circumstances."[1]

Thus Lightfoot rejects the giving of an active sense to Pleromata in the first passage by interpreting it as in apposition to κοφίνους (which he takes instead of κοφίνων), which is possible but not probable. But he cannot so interpret the second passage. Here he admits that it looks like an active use, but objects to it without any further explanation.

It is to be observed that in the second passage, Pleromata is used with the same significance as πλήρεις in the parallel question. Thus it seems evident that the two words are practically interchangeable as used here, that both refer to the filling substance, and that Pleromata, therefore, would have an active sense.

(3) The Use of Pleroma in the Prologue of the Fourth Gospel.

John i. 16.
ὅτι ἐκ τοῦ πληρώματος αὐτοῦ ἡμεῖς ἐλάβομεν, καὶ

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1. Lightfoot, The Epistles of St. Paul, Colossians and Philemon, p. 260.

χάριν ἀντὶ χάριτος.

"For of His fulness we have all received, and grace upon grace."[1]

Here Pleroma may have only a literal meaning, there being apparently a play on words (πλήρης). But on the other hand, it might well be that the Evangelist intended it in a theological sense. Certainly it sounds very similar to the use St. Paul makes of the term in certain places.[2] Further, the Evangelist's use of other current terms, λόγος, ζωή, φῶς, μονογενής, and possibly others, would suggest that Pleroma, too, belongs in the same category and is purposely used. R. H. Strachan says:

> "The use of the word (Pleroma) is best understood both in Paul and in John, if we realize that they both intend by their use of it to deny a false doctrine. Christ is not one of a number of intermediary beings between God and the world. He is the sole mediator in the creation and government of the world. . . . In thus using the term, Pleroma, the Evangelist is actually restating his doctrine of the Logos, and in particular of the 'Logos made flesh.'. . . . Here His fulness denotes the fulness of grace and truth, the whole divine energy of God's love, manifest in the Word made flesh."[3]

It might be noted that Irenaeus says that John, the disciple of the Lord, wrote his Gospel to refute the teachings of Cerinthus and the Nicolaitans, in which passage Irenaeus attributes the term, Pleroma, to them in connection with their false doctrines.[4]

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1. Cf. verse 14 preceding, "And we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full (πλήρης) of grace and truth."

2. Col. ii. 10; Eph. iii. 19.

3. Strachan, The Fourth Gospel, pp. 107 f.

4. Irenaeus, op. cit., III, xi, 1. Quoted supra, p. 29.

C. The Use of Pleroma by St. Paul.

(Excepting Colossians and Ephesians).

Outside of the Gospels, the term is used in the New Testament only by St. Paul.

(1) The Fulness of the Earth.

I Corinthians x. 26.

τοῦ γὰρ Κυρίου ἡ γῆ καὶ τὸ πλήρωμα αὐτῆς.

"For the earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof."

This is simply a quotation from Psalm xxiv. 1 (LXX xxiii. 1) to which reference has already been made.[1]

(2) The Fulness of Israel and the Fulness of the Gentiles.

Romans xi. 12.

εἰ δὲ τὸ παράπτωμα αὐτῶν πλοῦτος κόσμου, καὶ τὸ ἥττημα αὐτῶν πλοῦτος ἐθνῶν, πόσῳ μᾶλλον τὸ πλήρωμα αὐτῶν;

"Now if their fall means the riches of the world, and their loss the riches of the Gentiles, how much more their fulness."

Romans xi. 25.

ὅτι πώρωσις ἀπὸ μέρους τῷ Ἰσραὴλ γέγονεν, ἄχρις οὗ τὸ πλήρωμα τῶν ἐθνῶν εἰσέλθῃ.

". . . . that a hardening in part has come to Israel until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in."

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1. Supra, p. 41 and footnote 3.

In both passages the word seems to have very much the same significance and means respectively "the full number or full inclusion of the Jews," and "the full number or full times of the Gentiles." In these passages it is impossible to decide between an active and a passive sense, for it depends upon how the verses are to be interpreted, and the meaning is somewhat vague. If it is God who makes full the Pleroma of the Jews and of the Gentiles, then Pleroma would have an active sense. If, on the other hand, Pleroma signifies the "full quota of persons or of time" fulfilled by the Jews and Gentiles themselves, it would be passive. Perhaps no decision should be attempted in this instance.

(3) The Fulness of the Blessing of Christ.

Romans xv. 29.

οἶδα δὲ ἐρχόμενος πρὸς ὑμᾶς ἐν πληρώματι
εὐλογίας Χριστοῦ ἐλεύσομαι.

"And I know that when I come to you I shall come in the fulness of the blessing of Christ."

I understand Pleroma as passive here, as qualified by Χριστοῦ. In other words, the "fulness of the blessing of Christ" is something imparted by Christ, not to Him.

(4) The Fulness of Time.

Galatians iv. 4.

ὅτε δὲ ἦλθε τὸ πλήρωμα τοῦ χρόνου, ἐξαπέστειλεν
ὁ θεὸς τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ.

"But when the fulness of the time came, God sent forth His Son."[1]

We have already noted that in some instances Pleroma is used somewhat as an adjective, as the equivalent of πλήρης. Such is the case before us. The meaning is the same as though the reading were: ὅτε δὲ ἦλθε ὁ πλήρης χρόνος, or, ὅτε δὲ ἐπληρώθη ὁ χρόνος. We should not attempt either an active or a passive sense in this verse.

(5) Love, the Fulfilment of the Law.

Romans xiii. 10.

πλήρωμα οὖν νόμου ἡ ἀγάπη.

"Love, then, is the fulfilment of the law."[2]

We shall now comment briefly on Lightfoot's meaning of "a passive sense." The verse before us gives us a typical example. Concerning it he says:

"In Romans xiii. 10, the best comment on the meaning of the word is the context, verse 8, ὁ ἀγαπῶν τὸν ἕτερον νόμον πεπλήρωκεν, so that πλήρωμα here means the 'completeness' and so 'fulfilment, accomplishment.'"[3]

It is seen in the instance before us that Lightfoot interprets the word passively because it means "completeness." To him, it is active only if it is the segment or portion which, when added, completes the whole. Therefore if anything completely fills a receptacle, or completely fulfils something

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1. With this should be compared Eph. i. 10 and Mark i. 15.

2. Cf. Rom. xiii. 8 and Gal. v. 14.

3. Lightfoot, The Epistles of St. Paul, Colossians and Philemon, p. 260.

else, to him it is passive; i.e., "the fulness of the cup of Zeus" is passive; "a handful" is passive; "Faith is the fulfilment of pleasant hopes" is passive; and so forth.

This is not the usual understanding of the distinction between an active and a passive sense. According to the general understanding, a word is active if it is the agent of the action, and passive if it is the recipient of the action; or, to put it otherwise, it is active if it acts, and passive if it is acted upon. In the case before us, the question is whether love fulfils the law or is fulfilled by the law. The answer is obvious. The fact that love is the complete fulfilment of the law, and is not a section or addition to the law, in no way makes Pleroma passive.

With this interpretation, Romans xiii. 8 and Galatians v. 14 agree.

> "He who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law."
>
> "For the whole law is fulfilled in one word, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

In each case, the law is the thing fulfilled; love is the active agent which does the fulfilling.

But passing all of this by, we have already mentioned several cases where Pleroma does apparently mean "that segment or portion which, when added, completes the whole."[1]

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1. Supra, pp. 9-12. It might be observed from the standpoint of interest that Damacius (c. 480 A. D.) uses Pleroma to indicate a part of the total man, the part (mortal, reason, form, etc.) being designated as a Pleroma and the aggregate as Pleromata; likewise the constituent parts of nature. Dubitationes et Solutiones, paragraphs 14, 28, 34, 35, 56, and 58.

CHAPTER III.

THE THEOLOGICAL USE OF THE TERM PLEROMA WITH REFERENCE TO JESUS CHRIST.

Colossians i. 19-20.

ὅτι ἐν αὐτῷ εὐδόκησεν πᾶν τὸ πλήρωμα κατοικῆσαι,
καὶ δι' αὐτοῦ ἀποκαταλλάξαι τὰ πάντα εἰς αὐτόν. . . .

"For God was pleased that in Him should all the fulness dwell, and through Him to reconcile all things unto Himself. . . ."[1]

Colossians ii. 9.

ὅτι ἐν αὐτῷ κατοικεῖ πᾶν τὸ πλήρωμα τῆς θεότητος
σωματικῶς. . . .

"For in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. . . ."

A. The Contexts.

Colossians i. 19 occurs as a part of a great Christological passage in which the Apostle affirms the sovereignty of Christ over all creation and then over His new creation, the Church. In verses 13-14, he speaks of the fact of redemption which both he and the Christians at Colossae had personally experienced through God's "beloved Son." He is to return to the thought of the experience of redemption in verse 21, but the mention of God's "beloved Son" in verse 13 has brought Paul to his central theme --- the Redeemer Himself, His divine nature, His sovereignty over all, and the complete adequacy of

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1. The subject of this sentence is not absolutely clear in the Greek. We shall have something to say about this in the exegetical notes.

the redemption which He has wrought "through the blood of His cross." The entire Christological passage is in the form of a parallel, the first part affirming His Lordship over the universe and the second part His Lordship over the Church.[1] It is in the second part of the parallelism where it is the Apostle's intent to show the all-sufficiency of Christ as the one, and only one, who could reconcile all things to God, that he makes the sweeping declaration, "For God was pleased that in Him should all the Pleroma dwell."

Colossians ii. 9 occurs in the midst of a warning against the false teachers. Paul does not deal in personalities, though doubtless he knew from Epaphras who the leaders were. His warning is reiterated throughout this chapter:

ii. 4, "I say this in order that no one may delude you."

ii. 8, "See to it that no one makes a prey of you. . . ."

ii. 16, "Therefore let no one pass judgment on you. . . ."

ii. 18, "Let no one disqualify you. . . ."

Colossians ii. 9 comes, then, in the midst of a warning against those teachers who would make "booty" of the Christians and whose "philosophy" was but "empty deceit, according to the traditions of men, according to the stoicheia of the world and not according to Christ --- for in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." The argument, of course, is not against learning as such, but against the idle and specious

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1. Dibelius, Handbuch zum Neuen Testament, ad loc., has a good discourse on this. See his diagram. But the parallelism in Colossians is more in thought and the use of some of the same words and phrases rather than a studied, balanced structure. This can be seen by filling in the parts which Dibelius omits in his diagram. Aside from this, the main point he makes is quite valid.

speculations and phantasies which characterized the philosophy (so-called) of these teachers at Colossae, which overlooked the plain teaching of the Gospel tradition.

B. Exegetical Notes.

Not all of the exegetical points of these verses will be attempted, but only those which bear most directly upon what St. Paul meant by Pleroma as used with reference to Jesus Christ.

(1) Exegetical Notes on Colossians i. 19-20.

Two questions primarily concern us in this passage, first, what is the meaning of the phrase πᾶν τὸ πλήρωμα ? Second, is this phrase, personified, to be considered as the subject of εὐδόκησε ? Both questions turn in part upon our understanding of εὐδόκησε. Therefore we shall first give our attention to this.

Lightfoot says that this verb is used absolutely of the divine purpose and therefore that ὁ θεός should be understood as the subject.[1] Meyer and Peake take the same view as this as to subject but then qualify πᾶν τὸ πλήρωμα to mean "graces" only, not the divine Essence as in ii. 9. Meyer says:

> "The ontological interpretation of the 'fulness of the nature of God' does not correspond to the idea of εὐδόκησε, for doubtless the sending of the Son, and that with the whole treasure of divine grace into the world (John iii. 17) on behalf of its reconciliation and

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1. Lightfoot, The Epistles of St. Paul, Colossians and Philemon, ad loc.

> blessedness, was the act of the divine pleasure and resolve; but not so the divine nature in Christ, which was, on the contrary, necessary in Him."[1]

And Peake comments:

> "Many think that θεότητος should be supplied after πλήρωμα, as is actually done in ii. 9. Serious difficulties beset this view. If we think of the eternal indwelling, we make it dependent on the Father's will, an Arian view, which Paul surely did not hold. . . . εὐδόκησε refers to a definite decree of the Father, and the obvious meaning of the words is that it lay within the Father's choice whether the πλήρωμα should dwell in the Son or not."[2]

Therefore both Meyer and Peake distinguish between the meaning of Pleroma in i. 19 and ii. 9. In the latter verse it means, according to the designation, "the fulness of the Godhead." But in i. 19, according to Meyer, who is quoted with approval by Peake, it refers to "the whole charismatic riches of God, His whole gracious fulness of spiritual blessing (Eph. i. 3)."[3] Meyer takes us to Ephesians iii. 19 for the meaning where the phrase πᾶν τὸ πλήρωμα τοῦ θεοῦ occurs. He says that it is "utterly arbitrary" to supply τῆς θεότητος from Colossians ii. 9. Is it not more "arbitrary" to go to Ephesians to find, supposedly, a different meaning? We must think long before we distinguish between the meaning of Pleroma in two passages so similar in the same Epistle and go to another Epistle to pick up, presumably, a different connotation where, we might add, the word is used not of Christ

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1. Meyer, Commentary on the New Testament, ad loc.
2. Peake, EGT, ad loc.
3. Meyer, op. cit., ad loc.

but of the fulness of God in believers; though doubtless it is inseparable in Paul's thought from the experience of the love of Christ mentioned in the preceding verse.

All of these views by Lightfoot, Meyer and Peake call for careful scrutiny. An examination of the uses of εὐδοκεῖν and its cognates in the New Testament will not bear out, I think, the contention that it refers to "a definite decree" or "the divine resolve." It is a word which means primarily "to be pleased." To refer first to the Pauline use, the verb occurs nine times (other than in i. 19).[1] Of these it is used seven times of human pleasure or desire. The other three times it is used of God and means simply that God was pleased:

> ". . . . it was God's good pleasure through the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe."[2]
>
> "Howbeit with most of them God was not well pleased."[3]
>
> "But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by His grace, to reveal His Son in me. . . ."[4]

Paul uses the substantive six times, three of them referring to human pleasure or desire or goodwill,[5] and three referring either to the divine purpose or good pleasure. In each of these passages "good pleasure" fits into the context just as

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1. Rom. xv. 26; I Cor. i. 21; x. 5; II Cor. v. 8; xii. 10; Gal. i. 15; I Thess. ii. 8; iii. 1; II Thess. ii. 12.

2. I Cor. i. 21.

3. I Cor. x. 5.

4. Gal. i. 15-16.

5. Rom. x. 1; Phil. i. 15; and II Thess. i. 11.

well as "purpose," if not better.

> ". . . . having foreordained us unto adoption as sons through Jesus Christ unto Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will. . . ."[1]
>
> ". . . . making known unto us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure. . . ."[2]
>
> ". . . . for it is God who worketh in you both to will and to work, for His good pleasure."[3]

Turning from Pauline use to other New Testament writings, the verb occurs eight times[4] and the substantive three,[5] in all cases referring to God (possibly excepting Luke ii. 14), and meaning in each instance "to be pleased," or "good pleasure."

But even if we allow that in some instances the word refers to God's purpose, as could be in the two quotations above from Ephesians, need it be so in Colossians i. 19? In the light of the heresy, Paul's meaning would favor simply, "God was pleased." The heretics, while professing to be worshippers of the Father, and perhaps adherents of a sort to Christianity, denied any real deity to Christ except as He was far removed from the Pleroma. Paul tells the Colossians on the contrary that Christ was (and is) in closest union with the Father, in fact His beloved Son, His very Image, and this, not as a rival to the Father, but all according to the Father's good pleasure. To my mind, this fits into the context and the

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1. Eph. i. 5.
2. Eph. i. 9.
3. Phil. ii. 13.
4. Matt. iii. 17; xii. 18; Mark i. 11; Luke iii. 22; xii. 32; Heb. x. 6, 38; and II Pet. i. 17.
5. Matt. xi. 26; Luke ii. 14; and x. 21.

whole background much better than if we take the word as "a definite decree of the Father" or "the divine resolve."

In regard to Lightfoot's view that εὐδόκησε is used absolutely of God's purpose, we may simply refer to Abbott's refutation.[1] He points out that the verb, εὐδοκεῖν, is used by St. Paul more frequently of men than of God (seven times to three), and cannot therefore be said to be a technical term for the divine counsel, nor is there any instance of its being used absolutely by St. Paul. Where he uses the verb with reference to God, ὁ Θεός is always expressed with the verb.[2] When the substantive is used with reference to God, it is either defined by a genitive,[3] or by ὁ Θεός as the subject of the sentence "where the article with an abstract noun after a preposition necessarily brings in a reflexive sense, to be referred to the subject of the sentence."[4] The one possible exception in the New Testament is Luke ii. 14, where the reading is doubtful. Hence Abbott argues that we are not warranted in inferring ὁ Θεός from the verb, εὐδόκησε.

Perhaps the chief objection to Meyer's and Peake's understanding of πᾶν τὸ πλήρωμα in i. 9, however, does not lie in their interpretation of the verb, but in the fact that their theory fails to bring into focus the use of πᾶν τὸ πλήρωμα

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1. Abbott, ICC, Ephesians and Colossians, ad loc.

2. I Cor. i. 21; x. 5; and Gal. i. 15.

3. Eph. i. 5, 9. (Quoted above).

4. Abbott, op. cit., ad loc. The case at issue is Phil. ii. 13 which Lightfoot gives as one of his references. The only other Scriptural reference to this verb or its cognates which Lightfoot gives in support of his theory is Luke ii. 14 where the correct reading is in doubt; though he cites some Church Fathers.

with reference to the Colossian heresy. It is out of line with the entire context and purpose of the Epistle. As we have already mentioned, Paul is presenting the absolute sovereignty of Christ and the completeness of the redemption which He has wrought. It would be quite foreign to the Apostle's thought in the immediate context in particular, and in the entire Epistle in general, to place the suggested limitation on the phrase and to have it mean only "the whole charismatic riches of God," but not the divine Essence. It should be emphasized, however, that neither Meyer nor Peake is questioning the divine nature of Christ, which both accept readily. It is simply the meaning of the phrase, πᾶν τὸ πλήρωμα, that is in question.

We now turn our attention more particularly to whether πᾶν τὸ πλήρωμα is to be considered as the subject. There are three possibilities for subject:

(1) ὁ θεός or ὁ πατήρ, understood.

(2) πᾶν τὸ πλήρωμα, personified.

(3) ὁ Χριστός or καὶ αὐτός, understood.[1]

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1. A glance at the various commentaries will reveal how divided opinions are. Favoring (1) are Meyer, Alford, Lightfoot, Oltramare, Haupt, Peake, de Wette, Winer, Fritzsche, Klöpper, E. F. Scott, R. A. Knox (in his translation), and others. Favoring (2) are Ewald, Ellicott, Weiss, von Soden, Abbott, Richard Schmidt, Dibelius, Moffatt (in his translation), and others. The Revised Standard Version takes Pleroma as the subject but qualifies it by τοῦ θεοῦ. Favoring (3) are Conybeare, Storr, Hofmann, Findlay, and others.

Let us notice the points at issue in each case. In favor of the first view (I), the following is to be said:

a. Among Greek authors, ὁ θεός is not infrequently omitted where it is self-evident as the subject.[1] Meyer cogently points out that whereas the subject, whose pleasure it is, is omitted, that it is God is obvious from the context which in ἵνα γένηται has just stated the divine purpose.[2] It needs to be observed also that in the longer context (i. 12-14), which often needs to be taken into consideration in Pauline writings, the subject is the Father.

b. ἀποκαταλλάξαι τὰ πάντα εἰς αὐτόν could then refer to God, to whom elsewhere in the New Testament the reconciliation of men, or the world, is always made.[3] From a grammatical standpoint, however, it might still refer to Christ regardless of what view is taken of the subject.

c. The masculine participle, εἰρηνοποιήσας (i. 20), points to a masculine subject as antecedent, either God, or Christ.

d. It is difficult to accept πᾶν τὸ πλήρωμα as it stands as subject. Peake rightly says:

> "What, however, is really decisive in its favor (i.e., ὁ θεός as subject) is the difficulty of accepting πᾶν τὸ πλήρωμα. The expression 'All the fulness was well pleased' is very strange in itself. But what is much stranger is that the fulness was not only pleased to dwell

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1. Cf. James i. 12 and iv. 6.
2. Meyer, op. cit., ad loc.
3. Rom. v. 10; II Cor. v. 18-20; Eph. ii. 16.

> in Him, but through Him to reconcile all things unto Him."[1]

The difficulty mentioned by Peake is alleviated if we accept τῆς θεότητος as involved in πᾶν τὸ πλήρωμα as in ii. 9, but Peake rejects this, as we have seen.

e. Lastly, Paul's statement seems to be an echo of Psalm lxviii. 16 (LXX lxvii. 16), τὸ ὄρος ὃ εὐδόκησεν ὁ θεὸς κατοικεῖν ἐν αὐτῷ.

In favor of the second view (2), to take πᾶν τὸ πλήρωμα as subject, the following is to be considered:

a. As we have already argued through Abbott, there is no other example in the New Testament of the absolute use of εὐδοκεῖν or its cognates unless it be in Luke ii. 14 where the reading is not clear.

b. In every New Testament passage (six) where some form of the verb εὐδοκεῖν is followed by an infinitive, the subject of the finite verb and the infinitive is the same.[2]

c. In a passage of such importance the subject would hardly have been omitted.

d. If we interpret πᾶν τὸ πλήρωμα according to ii. 9, as involving τῆς θεότητος, the meaning becomes quite clear and many of the exegetical difficulties disappear.

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1. Peake, op. cit., ad loc.

2. Rom. xv. 26; I Cor. i. 21; II Cor. v. 8; Gal. i. 15; I Thess. ii. 8; and iii. 1.

e. If we accept d., then the reconciliation (εἰς αὐτόν) may be referred to God in keeping with other New Testament passages, though one wonders why Paul did not then use ἑαυτόν.

In favor of the third view (3), Christ as subject, the following may be said:

a. The subject from verse 14 and following is for the most part the Son, and where it is otherwise (τὰ πάντα), the ascription is nevertheless to Him.

b. The unique emphasis on the sovereignty of Christ is noticeable throughout the entire passage. Things are predicated of Him which are usually reserved for God.

c. While elsewhere the reconciliation of the world is always referred to as "to God," in Ephesians v. 27 the Apostle speaks of Christ as presenting the Church to Himself, a thought somewhat kindred.

d. εἰρηνοποιήσας would then refer to Christ, corresponding to Ephesians ii. 14-16 where it is He who "makes peace" between Jew and Gentile.

e. The form of i. 19-20 then corresponds with that of i. 16, ἐν αὐτῷ . . . . δι' αὐτοῦ . . . . εἰς αὐτόν.

Of the three possibilities for subject, the third is the least likely, because:

----- The reconciliation then becomes to Christ, which elsewhere is said to be to God.

----- ἐν αὐτῷ, δι' αὐτοῦ and εἰς αὐτόν then become reflexive, which is possible but not natural, especially to an unexpressed subject, and the result is odd to say the least, "He was pleased that in Himself should all the fulness dwell and through Himself to reconcile all things to Himself."

----- The points above under (2) b., and c., are objections to the third view as well as the first.

Considering all of the above facts, is there any hope of coming to a conclusion as to subject? The most likely choice seems to be the second provided we understand πᾶν τὸ πλήρωμα to mean the same as in ii. 9 where it is qualified by τῆς θεότητος. The very similarity of the two verses, with some of the same words and phrases, would seem to justify this. Abbott says:

> "If this (πᾶν τὸ πλήρωμα) is the subject of εὐδόκησε, it, of course, means 'all the fulness of the Godhead,' τῆς θεότητος, as in ii. 9, 'omnes divitiae divinae naturae' (Fritzsche), πᾶν τὸ πλήρωμα being personified. But even if ὁ θεός is taken as the subject, it is most natural to interpret this expression by that in ii. 9, where κατοικεῖ is also used."[1]

And Dibelius says that the phrase signifies:

> ". . . . dass das göttliche Pleroma, die uneingeschränkte Fülle der Gottheit, in ihm Wohnung nahm und durch ihn das All erlöste."[2]

(2) Exegetical Notes on Colossians ii. 9.

Having thus considered Colossians i. 19, only one

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1. Abbott, op. cit., ad loc.
2. Dibelius, op. cit., ad loc.

further problem need concern us here, the meaning of σωματικῶς. Its position in the sentence is emphatic. The suggestions that have been made regarding this word range far and wide. The claims that it refers to either the Church or the cosmos may be dismissed as being most unlikely. Three other possibilities, however, deserve attention.

a. That the word simply means "really."[1] Colossians ii. 17 is referred to where σῶμα is used in the sense of "reality" or "substance," in contrast to "shadow."

b. That the word means "corporeally," or "as an organic whole."[2] Peake, accepting this view, says:

> "In contrast to the distribution of the fulness among the angels, or to the view that it dwelt only partially in Him, Paul insists that all the fulness dwells in Him, and not fragmentarily but as an organic whole."[3]

The chief objection to this view is that all references given to support it are to σῶμα, not to the adverb.

c. That the word refers to the actual body of Jesus and means that the indwelling was "in bodily fashion," or "in the form of a body." Meyer and Abbott understand the reference to be to Christ's "glorified body," while Lightfoot understands it to be to the Incarnation.[4] Meyer points to the present tense of the verb as proof that the reference is to the exalted

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1. So Bleek, Klöpper, Everling, Cremer, and more recently Dibelius.

2. So Haupt, Peake, and more recently E. F. Scott.

3. Peake, op. cit., ad loc.

4. Lightfoot, The Epistles of St. Paul, Colossians and Philemon, ad loc. He says that it is the equivalent of the Fourth Evangelist's, "The Word was made flesh."

state. But what Meyer is here trying to do is to justify his distinction between Pleroma as used in i. 19 as referring to graces only and in ii. 9 as referring to Godhead. Thus, so Meyer's argument would run, the fulness of the Godhead is not predicated of the Incarnate Christ but only of the Exalted Christ. I cannot but feel that his distinction is based upon some preconceived theory of the Kenosis rather than on exegetical grounds. Lightfoot, on the other hand, need not have confined the "indwelling fulness" to the Incarnate state, though doubtless he intends the reader to take for granted that the indwelling pertains also to the Exalted state.

It would seem that Lightfoot's view, with the qualification mentioned, is the nearest to the truth. Paul's emphasis elsewhere on "the body of His flesh through death"[1] and "the blood of His cross,"[2] through which the redemption spoken of had been achieved would suggest strongly that he was referring to the actual body of Christ, whether thought of as Incarnate or Glorified.[3] L. S. Thornton has well said:

> "When Christ died upon the Cross, His voluntary death in a mortal body had in it all the riches of the Godhead, all the fulness of deity. It is by this very fact that we are made rich. Now, in His risen and glorified state, He is still in the body. For the mortal body was raised from the tomb and became the risen body. So in Him all the fulness of the Godhead dwells in a bodily manner."[4]

If this third interpretation of σωματικῶς is to be

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1. Col. i. 22. Cf. Eph. ii. 15 and Rom. vii. 4.
2. Col. i. 20. Cf. Eph. ii. 13 and Rom. iii. 25.
3. See Phil. iii. 21.
4. Thornton, The Common Life in the Body of Christ, p. 298.

accepted, what was the motive behind the Apostle's use of it? Some have understood it to be already a refutation of Docetism,[1] one of the earliest of the heresies which confronted the Church. However, the reference here seems not to have been to Docetism but was one stage behind this, namely, an answer to a dualism which said that because Christ wore materiality, either He was not divine, or represented a low degree of divinity. W. L. Knox makes a very pertinent suggestion in this regard:

> "Docetism exaggerated His divine nature, whereas they (the Colossian teachers) seem to have depreciated it. It seems to be a summary reply to the argument that Jesus could not have been divine, for He had a real body and was really crucified, which is impossible for a divine being."[2]

C. The Use of Pleroma With Reference to the Colossian Heresy.[3]

Professor William Manson has given this summary of the false doctrine being circulated at Colossae and of St. Paul's answer to it:

> "What concerned the Apostle in the Colossian epistle was the propaganda at Colossae of a subtle form of syncretistic religion which, while giving a place to the Christian Redeemer in the mediating of the mystery of God to men, contended that there were whole areas of divine-cosmic relation which the Christian Gospel of forgiveness did not touch, in which, therefore, other spiritual intermediaries between God and man were to be recognized and worshipped. St. Paul's answer is to claim

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1. The heresy which said either (a) that the body of Jesus was only an illusion; or (b) that the divine Christ was joined to the human Jesus in an artificial fashion without any intermingling of the two natures.

2. Knox, op. cit., p. 168, footnote 3.

3. Some of the things touched upon only briefly in this section are discussed more at length in Appendix C on the Stoicheia.

> all such areas and functions of mediatorship for Jesus, and to do so on the ground that 'it was the divine good pleasure that in Him the whole Pleroma should dwell' (i. 19), that in Him 'the whole Pleroma of the Godhead dwells bodily' (ii. 9). The meaning is that in the person of Jesus Christ and in His historical work we have the perfect revelation of the mind of Him who is at once our Creator and Redeemer. We cannot anywhere or ever think of God's relation to His world except in terms of Christ."[1]

The Colossian heresy was, as Professor Manson suggests, syncretistic in character, being perhaps a medley of Judaism, Gnosticism and the Mystery religions. Such syncretism was characteristic of the age and the Lycus Valley would furnish fertile soil for such a hybrid combination.[2]

It is reasonable to assume that the term, Pleroma, had a more or less definite theological value in the heresy when St. Paul wrote. Lightfoot says that except the term as used in an unqualified sense in i. 19 did have a theological value, "it becomes otherwise unintelligible, for it does not explain itself."[3]

The concept of Pleroma in the heresy is best understood if we keep in mind the figure of a light which throws out rays far into space, the intensity of which rays diminishes in ratio to the distance from the source. Professor Edwin Lewis says in this regard:

> "If the Colossian error was an incipient Gnosticism, then it was supposing that the divine fulness overflowed in the same automatic and necessary fashion in which light may be said to overflow from the sun. Geographical distance determined metaphysical significance.

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1. William Manson, op. cit., pp. 159 f.

2. See Lightfoot's chapter, "The Churches of the Lycus," The Epistles of St. Paul, Colossians and Philemon, pp. 1 ff.

3. Ibid., p. 261.

> The regressus could not begin until the egressus was complete. Since man was at the nadir of the process, it followed that the stages of his return toward the divine fulness consisted in successive escapes from the entanglements that determined the scale of the descent."[1]

According to what was being circulated, God was infinitely remote from the mundane universe. He was related to it only through the emanations from Himself, spoken of variously as "Powers," "Aeons," "Demiurgi," and "Angels." The significance of such alleged Powers depended upon their position in the celestial hierarchy. The farther a Power was from the source, the more it became an admixture of light and darkness, good and evil. The Powers of the lowest orders might be thought of as predominantly evil and opposed to the will of God. The mundane universe owed its origin to one, or more than one, of these. As for man, he too owed his origin to the same source and therefore he also was a poor admixture of good and evil, somewhat akin to God as attested by the longing of his spirit for God, but at the same time akin to materiality and held captive by the burden of the flesh, the seat of his evil passions.[2]

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1. From an article by Edwin Lewis, "Paul and the Perverters of Christianity," Interpretation, A Journal of Bible and Theology, April, 1948, p. 152.

2. The following quotation from the Hermetica shows what dualism led to: "It is necessary that you first tear off the garment that you wear, the web of ignorance, the living death, the sensible corpse, the portable tomb, the robber in the house, the enemy who hates the things which you desire, and who grudges you the things you wish. Such is the hostile garment in which you have clothed yourself, and which holds you down to itself, lest you should look up and contemplate the beauty of Truth and the Good that abides in yonder world." (Libellus VII, 2b. Scott, Hermetica, Vol. I, p. 173).

Somewhere in their hierarchy they gave a place to Christ. But that He was of a very low order was evident from the fact that He wore an actual "body of flesh," and also by the fact that He was the victim of the Principalities and Powers, unable to save Himself from the cross and the death which they inflicted. (It is also probable that the false teachers were saying that Paul, too, was the victim of the evil Powers as shown by his sufferings; see i. 24). Only a part of the Pleroma therefore could be said to have resided in Him, and a very small part at that! It followed that any redemption which He offered, while not without some value as a sacrifice for sins, was only partial, weak and immature, a poor beginning. An offering for sin was not enough. There remained the cosmic enemies to be overcome from which Christ had not saved Himself, the Principalities and Powers, Fate, Destiny, the Stoicheia. Since these powers were manifestly stronger than He, how could He deliver from them? Whereas He offered "redemption" of a sort (καταλλαγή), what was really needed was "complete redemption" (ἀποκαταλλαγή).[1]

Such redemption was to be had, so they continued, through initiation into the mysteries, through ἐπίγνωσις (whereas the ordinary Christian had only γνῶσις), through allignment with higher powers, much higher than Christ, and, of course, much higher than the opposing forces. The initiated became "enlightened" with secret knowledge, secrets hidden

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1. Meyer speaks of ἀποκαταλλάξαι as "to reconcile quite." ". . . . as we might say in German, abversöhnen, that is: to finish quite the reconciliation." (op. cit., p. 300, footnote 2.).

from ordinary men and also from the hostile forces. Redemption was not an act of God. It was a process of advancing from one mystery to another. At death, the soul, with a knowledge of secret formulas, or passwords, and perhaps other vain creations of the imagination, would mount upwards through the hostile spheres, quoting the magic formula at each sphere which would admit entrance through it, until at last it reached its home, the Pleroma.[1]

But not all men were capable of receiving such knowledge, only a select few, only those "spiritual" by nature.[2] As for others, they would have to manage as best they could with only an elementary form of redemption, but doubtless would fall the victims of the hostile forces.

St. Paul's answer was an uncompromising and unequivocal "NO!" But he presents his arguments not by negatives, but by the positive presentation of the truth. His refutation forms the shrewdest, or cleverest, writing in the New Testament. He seizes the catch-terms and phrases of the opposition, what E. F. Scott aptly calls their "jargon,"[3] and turns them against them. All of this was not done in an hour or two, we may be sure. This Epistle shows signs of as careful thought and preparation, in its own way, as Romans and Galatians.

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1. Some of this may have come later. It is difficult, of course, to know just the limits of the heresy at Colossae.

2. I am inferring this from the way Paul uses "spiritual wisdom and understanding" in i. 9 (though this may be quite wrong), and from the later use made of the idea by the Gnostics who claimed to be "spiritual" by nature and beyond contamination. Irenaeus, op. cit., I, vi, 1-4; vii. 1-5.

3. Scott, MNTC, Colossians, pp. 41, 51, 54.

The Apostle's refutation may be paraphrased as follows:

". . . . But in addition to all this good news brought by Epaphras, he also had a word which causes us grave concern. For he tells us that 'philosophers' have come into your midst who would make booty of you with their high-sounding phrases and empty nonsense. I warn you of them; do not allow anyone to rob you of your prize.

"They tell you that Christ is only one of many Aeons which have emanated from the Pleroma, that He has only a fraction of the Pleroma in His Person, and a small fraction at that, since He belongs to a very low order as evident by the fact that He had a real body and further was the victim of the Principalities and Powers. They affirm that beyond His proffered redemption of forgiveness of sins, it is necessary to have a cosmic deliverance from Principalities and Powers, Fate, Destiny, the Stoicheia, or whatever their hierarchy be called. Such deliverance, so they allege, is to be had through initiation into the mysteries, through a superior knowledge, through an allignment with Powers higher in the scale.

"All this and much more they tell you. But I exhort you, pay no attention to their philosophy which is but empty deceit. This is not according to the Gospel of Christ which you heard and which is universally preached.

You have been redeemed by none other than God's own beloved Son. Could there be anyone closer to the Father than that? He is sovereign over all creation, being the visible image of the invisible God; the one through whom all creation came into being, subsists and tends. He is also the Firstborn of God's new creation, the Church, as attested by His resurrection from the dead. All of the Pleroma of the Godhead was pleased to dwell in Him and through Him to reconcile all things unto the Father. Such reconciliation He has wrought in the body of His flesh through death, by the blood of His cross.

"All this talk about 'higher Powers' comes to nought, for such powers as there be, whether hostile or friendly, are necessarily subject to Him. This is not negated by the cross but affirmed by it. There He took the bond written in ordinances which was against us, which was contrary to us, and cancelled it, nailing it to the cross. He invaded the very realm of the Principalities and Powers, met them on their own ground, disarmed them, and led them captive as a public spectacle behind His triumphal chariot.

"Do not be deceived about 'hidden mysteries' and a 'higher knowledge.' In Christ are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge hidden, and having Him you have all. He is God's mystery hidden for ages and generations but now revealed to the saints. Such knowledge and so great

a redemption are offered to all men everywhere. Our one aim is to present every man perfect in Christ.

"So I exhort you once again that even as you have remained steadfast in your faith in Christ, so continue to walk in Him, rooted and builded up in Him and established in your faith, even as you were taught, and always abounding in thanksgiving."

D. Whence St. Paul's Lofty Christology?

The question naturally arises in one's mind from this great Christological passage (i. 15-20) as to where and how St. Paul arrived at such a lofty concept of Christ, in which things are predicated of Him which are usually reserved for God. The whole question is a large one, and we cannot do more here than to summarize some of the widely divergent views and to suggest a probable course.

Some have denied the genuineness of the passage, or perhaps the genuineness of the entire Epistle. Professor Porter furnishes a striking example of one who, accepting the the authenticity of the Epistle in general, denies that these verses are Pauline and ascribes them to some later hand.[1] He likewise has an explanation for other passages of similar vein, especially I Corinthians viii. 6:

"Yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist."

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1. F. C. Porter, The Mind of Christ, pp. 168-203.

This latter passage he calls a "Stoic creed" which Paul is simply quoting, without denial or affirmation, from the letter which presumably the Corinthians had sent to him with their questions. Most passages which give Christ a cosmic aspect, however, he explains as ascriptions to the Exalted Christ, not to a Pre-existent Christ. According to Porter, St. Paul never thought of Christ as pre-existing as a living entity but only in the forethought and purpose of God.[1] We shall not attempt here to refute Professor Porter's arguments, although we strongly dissent from them.

W. L. Knox says that "the language was forced upon Paul by his opponents."[2] It is not clear just what he means by this, for elsewhere he says:

> "For him (Paul) the position of Jesus as the center of the life of the cosmos was not a matter of philosophy but an obvious and indisputable fact."[3]

Of course the Colossian heresy was the occasion for whatever Paul wrote, and, as we have said, he skilfully made use of some of their terms to refute them, but in this Christological passage it is not terms which confront us primarily, but ideas --- concepts of Christ as the creator, sustainer and goal of the universe, and the Head of redeemed humanity, the Church. Whatever Knox intended by his words, it is unthinkable that the Apostle's concepts of Christ were forced upon him and that his Christology took on new aspects just to meet the

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1. Ibid., pp. 169-171, 202, 263, and elsewhere.
2. Knox, op. cit., p. 167.
3. Ibid., p. 177.

heresy. Besides, he reiterates that what he is writing is nothing new but is according to the Gospel which they had received.[1]

Others have found the source of the Apostle's lofty ascriptions in the general Stoic philosophy concerning the Logos, and affirm that St. Paul was simply taking over for Christ such claims as were held of the Logos, or that at any rate he uses Logos terminology to describe Christ. We may summarize this view in the words of E. F. Scott:

> "In Him we have the ultimate reality, so that His work for us is all-sufficient. For the purpose of this argument Paul avails himself of a doctrine which was henceforth to play a cardinal part in Christian theology, but of which he makes little use in his earlier writings. He identifies Christ with the Logos, which according to the Alexandrian philosophy was the principle of creation, the intermediary between God and the world."[2]

However, as against any decided dependence upon the philosophical aspects of the Logos, it is strongly contended in some quarters, rightly I think, that in the New Testament where the word or the concepts occur, the authors are much more dependent upon the Hebraic "Word" (dᵉbar) through which "the worlds were framed."[3]

In a quite similar way others associate Paul's Christology with the Hebrew "Wisdom," personified. We may

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1. Col. i. 5-6; i. 23; and ii. 6-7.

2. Scott, op. cit., p. 12. Cf. Lightfoot, The Epistles of St. Paul, Colossians and Ephesians, ad loc., and pp. 143 ff., and G. H. Dix's article, Journal of Theological Studies, Vol. XXVI, pp. 1 ff.

3. So T. W. Manson, "The Life of Jesus," (5) The Fourth Gospel, Rylands Bulletin, Vol. 30, no. 2, May 1947; Hoskyns, Fourth Gospel, 159-162; Dodd, in A Companion to the Bible, (T. W. Manson, Editor), p. 413; Temple, Readings in St. John's Gospel, (First and Second Series), p. 4.

allow C. H. Dodd to summarize this view:

> "It seems probable also, though the proof is not complete, that some teachers, independently of Paul, had associated His authority (Christ's) as the revealer of God with the Old Testament idea of the divine Wisdom, which in Hellenistic Judaism represents some of the functions of the Holy Spirit. Paul, in I Corinthians i. 24, says that Christ is 'the Power of God and the Wisdom of God.' In Colossians i. 15-19, without mentioning the word 'wisdom,' he uses language which can be traced in every point (except the one word 'fulness') to Jewish Wisdom theology. According to this, Christ (as 'life-giving Spirit') is, so to speak, the thought of God projected from Him, to be the principle by which the world is both created and sustained, and finally brought to the perfection and unity designed by the Creator. . . . This 'Wisdom-Christology' made it possible for Paul to give a more adequate account of what was meant by calling Christ the Son of God. He did not begin to be such at His resurrection, or at His baptism, or at His birth. He is a revelation in time of the eternal Wisdom, or thought of God, proceeding from Him, yet eternally one with Him."[1]

C. F. Burney has contended that we do not need to go to Stoicism for the formula "in whom, through whom, and unto whom," nor for any of the terms used in the Colossians passage, for they are an obvious Rabbinic interpretation of Genesis i. 1 and Proverbs viii. 22; "rêshîth" being capable of meaning each of the following: "Beginning," "Head," "Sum-total," and "Firstfruits" (Firstborn); while "bĕrêshîth" would give in addition the prepositions "in, through, and unto."[2]

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1. Dodd, in A Companion to the Bible, (T. W. Manson, Editor), p. 409.

2. Burney, in an article, Journal of Theological Studies, Jan. 1926, Vol. XXVII, pp. 160 ff. This would answer Norden's contention (Agnostos Theos, pp. 240 ff.) that this passage is based on Stoic conceptions. Others are equally sure of the Wisdom comparison, among whom may be mentioned: Knox, op. cit., esp. pp. 159 and 164-165; also Some Hellenistic Elements in Primitive Christianity, pp. 40 f.; Windisch, in Neutestamentliche Studien, (G. Heinrici, Editor), pp. 220 ff.; and W. D. Davies, Paul and Rabbinic Judaism, pp. 147 ff.

Others have found the answer to be in Paul's own experience of redemption. The one who had achieved the redemption of mankind, such as Paul himself had experienced, could be none other than God's beloved Son. No ascription, therefore, was too great to give Him, not simply because of gratitude and love, but because such a soteriological work could have been effected only by such a Person. This view has many advocates. Here we shall allow H. A. A. Kennedy to summarize it:

> "Starting from his own experience, Paul was convinced that the most momentous event in the history of the individual was his redemption from sin and from the sway of that hierarchy of evil forces to which he regarded the present world-order as subject. . . . In Christ crucified, the Redeemer of men from an evil order of things and its conqueror, Paul is assured that he has come into touch with Ultimate Reality. Hence he feels justified in elaborating the implications which such a Reality involves: pre-existence, mediation of the Divine activity in creation, the sustaining principle of the universe, the goal of all being."[1]

Still others point out that we should not be so surprised at St. Paul's Christology for there was no real divergence from the faith of the Primitive Community, and the Apostle was simply giving voice to a Gospel which, for the most part he had received from the earlier followers of Jesus and which he held in common with them.[2] Mackintosh cogently points

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1. Kennedy, The Theology of the Epistles, pp. 152 and 156. For similar views see: Paul Wernle, The Beginnings of Christianity, Vol. I, pp. 355 ff.; Mackintosh, op. cit., pp. 70 f.; Quick, Doctrines of the Creed, pp. 79 f.; Forsyth, The Person and Place of Jesus Christ, pp. 6, 9-10, 29-30, and other places; and J. K. Mozley's chapter, "Christology and Soteriology," in Mysterium Christi, (Bell and Deissmann, Editors), pp. 167 ff.

2. A. M. Hunter, Paul and His Predecessors, pp. 97 ff., argues for this at some length. Cf. Knox, St. Paul and the Church of Jerusalem, pp. 30 ff.; and G. S. Duncan, "From Paul to Jesus," Scottish Journal of Theology, March 1949, Vol. 2, no. 1, pp. 1 ff.

out that whereas some objections may have been raised to Paul's interpretation of the law, no one so far as we have record ever raised any question about his estimate of Christ.[1] As already stated, Paul emphasizes to the Colossians that what he is saying in his Epistle is nothing new but according to the Gospel which they had already received and which was universally preached.[2] The slogans "Back to the historic Jesus," and "Jesus or Paul," are now for the most part a thing of the past, rightly so, and it is now generally recognized that this movement went entirely too far in claiming that Paul had appended great affirmations to one who was really a quite simple Galilean and who made no such claims for Himself.

Can we come to any conclusion then regarding St. Paul's lofty Christology? Some scholars, so it seems, have over-emphasized some one element, such as the Logos doctrine, or the Wisdom comparison, and have failed to grasp a more comprehensive view of the Apostle's background, thought and purpose. It is possible to become so entranced with some favorite theory as to become oblivious to other facts. To understand St. Paul's Christology we must emphasize not one but all elements in his experience, but all under the one uppermost conviction of his mind, that Christ was really the Messiah foretold in Scripture as attested by the resurrection from the dead.

St. Paul's experience of Christ began, so far as we

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1. Mackintosh, op. cit., p. 74. Cf. Stewart, A Man in Christ, p. 294.

2. See supra, p. 76, footnote 1.

have record, as a persecutor of the Church such as existed. It is reasonable to suppose that as a persecutor he knew something of the tenets of the faith he was persecuting, especially the claims that Christ was the Messiah foretold by the prophets and the Son of God. To Paul all this was anathema. That a simple teacher, though a wonder-worker too, who died upon a cross could be the Messiah and the Son of God was preposterous! Surely there is an autobiographical touch in his later assertion that the cross is "to the Jew a scandal."[1]

But the Damascus Road encounter, explain it how we may, changed the entire outlook. Then Christ was not dead but alive, as His followers had been claiming, and had appeared even to him.[2] This turned the tide! Whatever Paul did, he did with his might, and now the ardent antagonist became an avowed follower. The cross was seen in new light. From being an offense, it became the very center of God's plan of redemption. Pfleiderer says:

> "Was the crucified Jesus really the risen Christ and Lord from heaven? This was the question at issue in the conflicts in Paul's soul preparatory to his conversion. As soon as this question had been set at rest by the vision of Christ, the fundamental principle of his Gospel was settled in his mind. The very thing that had previously been to him the stone of stumbling and offense, then became the foundation and corner-stone of his new religious system. Thenceforth he determined to know nothing but Jesus Christ as the crucified and risen Lord. These two facts (which in his view became one, in so far as it was precisely by His

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1. I Cor. i. 24.

2. Paul always claimed that Christ had appeared to him and places this on a par with the other post-resurrection appearances. I Cor. xv. 4-8; Cf. ix. 1; Acts ix. 3-8; xxii. 6-11; and xxvi. 12-18.

> resurrection that the crucified Jesus was shown to be the Christ and the saving significance of His death on the cross was guaranteed) constituted the Alpha and Omega of his Gospel."[1]

St. Paul's Christology must always be viewed in the light of the resurrection. For the other Apostles, their experience of Christ was just the reverse. They began, doubtless, by thinking of Jesus as solely human, however much they may have thought of him as a teacher, wonder-worker and friend. But as they lived with Him and came to know Him more intimately, they became convinced that such complimentary estimates did not explain Him, until we have the great confession at Caesarea Philippi.[2] But for Paul, the Gospel which he "received"[3] concerning all that Jesus began both to do and to teach entered through the door of the Exalted Lord.

With this background, his Christology and the language he uses to convey his concepts are not too difficult to understand. Once convinced that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God, the rest followed by logical and necessary inference. Such a Person, so clearly more than human, so manifestly divine, was most naturally thought of as eternally one with the Father[4] and therefore the agent with the Father in creation. The Apostle never actually says that Christ is God (unless we so read Romans ix. 5, which is probably to be translated

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1. Otto Pfleiderer, The Hibbert Lectures, 1885, (Lectures on the influence of the Apostle Paul on the development of Christianity), pp. 48 f.

2. Mark viii. 27-30; Matt. xvi. 13-16; Luke ix. 18-20.

3. I Cor. xi. 23; xv. 3.

4. On Paul's belief in the pre-existence of Christ, see Rom. i. 3; viii. 3; I Cor. viii. 6; x. 4; xv. 47; II Cor. viii. 9; Gal. iv. 4; Phil. ii. 6-8; and Col. i. 15-17.

otherwise), but he does link the name of Christ with that of God the Father in the same phrase time and time again.[1] Quick says:

> "That St. Paul did definitely, if one may be allowed the expression, rank Jesus with God, is abundantly clear from evidence which extends all through his Epistles. . . . In almost all his Epistles, from the earliest onwards, he mentions God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ together as the source of grace and peace, and in one such prayer he actually puts first the name of Christ (II Thess. ii. 16; Cf. I Thess. iii. 11). In both passages the two names of God the Father and the Lord Jesus govern a verb in the singular."[1]

This is not to forget, however, that St. Paul also at times expresses the subordination of the Son to the Father.[2]

What then of the current language and concepts of the Logos and Wisdom which, allegedly, Paul took over and applied to Christ? It is to be admitted, I think, that the Apostle does make use of such language and thought; but only because he was first of all convinced of the Lordship of Christ. Any current terms and concepts with which he was familiar were either assimilated in his mind and used for what they were worth, or discarded; but if used, they had first to meet the requirements of the Exalted Christ. Some of the affirmations made of the Logos and Wisdom, which were purely mythological creations so far as personal entity was concerned, could really and truly be said of Jesus Christ whose historicity was beyond doubt. Further, if Paul was to get his Christology across, what better method could he employ than to use such terms and concepts

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1. Quick, op, cit., p. 83.

2. I Cor. iii. 23; xi. 3; and xv. 28. See Mackintosh, op. cit., pp. 71 ff.

by which he would be understood? Mackintosh has well said:

> "The revelation of God in Christ, if interpreted at all, must of course be interpreted by ideas already present in the world; ideas, we may believe, not altogether unmoulded by a higher wisdom for the service they were to render. . . . It is indeed difficult to conceive how an Apostolic writer is to satisfy a certain type of criticism. Let him create a new world of ideas, and he is in danger of being pronounced unintelligible; let him use the categories of his day, even though baptized in the name of Christ, and he is scouted as a plagiarist who has nothing new to say."[1]

Hence we conclude that however St. Paul phrased his concepts of Christ, he did so first, foremost and only because he was convinced of the Lordship of Christ, and this had been confirmed for him "by the resurrection from the dead."[2]

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1. Ibid., pp. 76 and 86.
2. Rom. i. 4.

CHAPTER IV.

THE USE OF PLEROMA WITH REFERENCE TO THE CHURCH.

Ephesians i. 22-23.

. . . . καὶ αὐτὸν ἔδωκε κεφαλὴν ὑπὲρ πάντα τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ, ἥτις ἐστὶ τὸ σῶμα αὐτοῦ, τὸ πλήρωμα τοῦ τὰ πάντα ἐν πᾶσι πληρουμένου.

We now come to the question towards which our previous discussion of the active or passive sense of Pleroma has been leading, whether Pleroma as used here of the Church is active, meaning that which completes or fulfils Christ; or passive, meaning that which is completed and filled by Him.

Before discussing this further, however, we should examine a third possibility which would throw an entirely different light upon this passage. It has been suggested by F. K. Meier,[1] A. E. N. Hitchcock,[2] and more recently by C. F. D. Moule[3] that the best explanation of this difficult verse is to take Pleroma as in apposition with αὐτόν. Thus the result would be somewhat as follows:

> "And God placed all things under His feet and gave Him to be Head over all things to the Church, which is His body, and to be the Pleroma (or, even Him who is the Pleroma) of Him (God) who fills all in all."

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1. F. K. Meier, Commentar über den Brief Pauli an die Epheser, (1834), ad loc.

2. A. E. N. Hitchcock, in an article in The Expository Times, (1910-1911), Vol. XXII, p. 91.

3. C. F. D. Moule, in an article in The Expository Times, (Nov. 1948), Vol. LX, p. 53.

This, of course, is not the natural syntax, for Pleroma would most naturally be associated with ἐκκλησίᾳ. But, as urged against this, it is pointed out that Paul, writing under emotion, frequently neglects the ordinary rules of Greek syntax, and his anacoluthons are well known. Hitchcock mentions only two examples, Romans ix. 10-11 and Ephesians ii. 3. In the latter case he points out that Robinson in his commentary refers ἐν οἷς not to υἱοῖς τῆς ἀπειθείας closely preceding, but to παραπτώμασι καὶ ἁμαρτίαις two verses before.

Abbott notes this third possible interpretation but quickly dismisses it on the grounds that:

> "This would make 'which is His body' a useless insertion, and worse than useless, as serving only to separate πλήρωμα from ἔδωκεν. Moreover, if the words were to mean 'even Him who is the Pleroma,' they should come after αὐτόν; as they stand they could only depend on αὐτὸν ἔδωκεν, 'gave Him to be Pleroma,' which does not yield a possible sense."[1]

Moule answers Abbott's objections as follows:

> "But in answer to the first objection it may be said that the clause 'which is His body' is a perfectly natural supplement to the phrase 'appointed Him as supreme Head to the Church': and even if it does not positively need a specific statement to explain to a reader that that to which a head belongs is a body, it is fantastic to describe so reasonable a redundancy as 'worse than useless' --- especially in a writing so full of noble repetitions as this Epistle. In answer to the second objection one may ask: (a) Is it unthinkable that, even in its present position, τὸ πλήρωμα may be intended to mean ὅς ἐστιν τὸ πλήρωμα --- 'He appointed as supreme Head of the Church (which is His body) Him (who is) the

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1. Abbott, op. cit., ad loc.

> fulness. . . .'? (b) If it appears that this is impossible Greek, does it, after all, yield an impossible sense if we do interpret the phrase to mean that 'God appointed Christ as both Head of the Church and as the fulness. . . .'?"[1]

He then proceeds to show that to ascribe the Pleroma to Christ is quite in line with other Pauline passages (Col. i. 19; ii. 9; and Eph. iv. 10) and concludes:

> "It is in keeping with the Christology both of Colossians and of the rest of Ephesians to say that God has made Christ's scope (if one may put it so) the same as His own: ἔδωκεν αὐτὸν τὸ πλήρωμα αὐτοῦ."[2]

If indeed this third interpretation is to be accepted, then a much vexed problem has been solved. However, the very fact that it is based upon an unnatural syntax will perhaps always throw scholars back to the view that the word is intended with reference to the Church.

Coming back then to the question of whether it is active or passive, we may note with interest what our translators have done with it. Both the Authorized and the American Standard (Revised) Versions translate the verse identically:

> ". . . . the Church, which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all."

The Revised Standard Version is practically the same:

> ". . . . the Church, which is His body, the fulness of Him who fills all in all."

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1. Moule, op. cit., p. 53.
2. Ibid.

Moffatt renders it:

> ". . . . the Church, the Church which is His Body, filled by Him who fills the universe entirely."

And Ronald A. Knox translates it:

> ". . . . so that the Church is His body, the completion of Him who everywhere and in all things is complete."

Dibelius says that Pleroma, as here used, may have a double-sense and does not discuss the problem further.[1] W. L. Knox sees in the verse a comparison with a common "Wisdom" concept; Wisdom fills all things and itself is being ever filled by God. Hence he paraphrases: The Church is "filled by Him who is always being filled."[2]

For our purpose, we may confine our attention to the views represented by Professors J. Armitage Robinson[3] and J. B. Lightfoot,[4] who may be said to be the chief exponents respectively of the active and passive interpretations of Pleroma in this passage.

If I may be allowed to present my conclusion at the outset and then the reasons for it as we proceed, it seems that Lightfoot is right in interpreting Pleroma passively

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1. Dibelius, op. cit., ad loc.

2. Knox, St. Paul and the Church of the Gentiles, p. 164; also p. 186.

3. Robinson, The Expositor, (1898), pp. 241 ff., and almost the identical arguments in St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians, ad loc., and a detached note on Pleroma, pp. 255 ff.

4. Lightfoot, The Epistles of St. Paul, Colossians and Philemon, a detached note on Pleroma, pp. 257 ff., and also his comment on Col. ii. 10.

in Ephesians i. 23, referring it to the Church ("the ideal Church" he calls it) "filled by all the divine graces which reside in Him,"[1] but wrong in his premise that Pleroma always has a passive sense.[2] Robinson, on the other hand, seems completely justified in his conclusion reached on etymological grounds that only usage can determine in the final analysis whether Pleroma is active or passive in a given passage, but wrong in giving it an active sense in Ephesians i. 23. Of course where usage alone must determine the answer there is room for a difference of opinion. But the weight of the evidence, so it seems, falls on the passive side. Some of the arguments for a passive sense in this verse Robinson does not mention, much less refute. Let us now turn to his case.

Taking Pleroma as active, he interprets πληρουμένου as passive; the Church is "the fulness of Him who all in all is being fulfilled."[3] If St. Paul had intended this word to be taken as having an active sense, why did he not then use πληροῦντος ? Compare Ephesians iv. 10 where he uses the active voice, ἵνα πληρώσῃ τὰ πάντα .

He calls attention to the fact that the early Egyptian and Latin Versions take πληρουμένου as passive, and while the Syriac Version, the Peshito, translates it as active, there is some evidence that the earlier Syriac Version, of which the

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1. Lightfoot, The Epistles of St. Paul, Colossians and Philemon, p. 263.

2. We have mentioned enough instances in Chapters I and II to refute this.

3. Robinson, op. cit., The Expositor, (1898), p. 254; Ephesians, p. 44.

Peshito was a revision, understood it as passive:

> "For St. Ephraim, a Syrian Father, wrote a Commentary on the Epistles of St. Paul in Syriac. It has been preserved to us in an Armenian translation; but from this we can see that the Version which St. Ephraim used must have given the verb a passive sense."[1]

Further, Chrysostom and Origen understand this verb as passive and speak of Christ as being completed by His Church.[2]

Such an interpretation, continues Robinson, is in line with other Scripture passages. The basis for this he finds in the idea of the identity of Christ and the Body, which idea has been worked out more recently in great detail by Thornton.[3] In some passages, so Robinson argues, Christ is no longer thought of as the Head and the Church as the Body separate and distinct, but Christ is the Whole of which the members are parts. The various members of the body, so essential to each other, also complete Christ who is the Whole. He calls upon I Corinthians xii. 12 for support:

> "For as the body is one and hath many members, and all the members of the body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ."

This is followed by the mention of the eye, ear, and sense of smell as well as the parts which belong more properly to the body, "the hand, the feet, and those parts less honorable," which shows that Paul is no longer thinking of Christ as the

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1. Ibid., The Expositor, (1898), p. 256; and Ephesians, p. 152.

2. For these quotations see Ibid., The Expositor, (1898), p. 257; and Ephesians, pp. 45 f.

3. L. S. Thornton, The Common Life in the Body of Christ.

Head and the Church as His body, but Christ as the Whole.[1] Likewise in the Fourth Gospel, Christ does not say, "I am the trunk of the vine and ye the branches," but "I am the Vine," i.e., the Whole of which the branches are parts.[2] In the analogy of marriage to signify the relationship between Christ and the Church, St. Paul bids the husbands to love their wives "as their own bodies," and says further that they are "one flesh."[3]

> "Not Headship here, but identity, is the relation in view."[4]

God's purpose is "to sum up all things in Christ."[5] But,

> "Until that great purpose is fully achieved, the Christ is not yet all that the Divine wisdom has determined that He shall be. He still waits His completeness, His fulfilment. As that is being gradually worked out, the Christ is being completed, 'being fulfilled.'"[6]

Therefore St. Paul could speak of filling up on his part that which was "lacking in the afflictions of Christ."[7]

> "If the Church and the Christ are one, the suffering of the Church and the suffering of the Christ are also one. . . . Thus then the Church, the completion of the Christ, is destined to complete His sufferings."[8]

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1. Robinson, op. cit., The Expositor, (1898), pp. 251 f., Ephesians, p. 41.
2. John xv. 5.
3. Eph. v. 28-31.
4. Robinson, op. cit., The Expositor, (1898), p. 252, Ephesians, p. 42.
5. Eph. i. 10.
6. Robinson, op. cit., The Expositor, (1898), p. 254, Ephesians, p. 44.
7. Col. i. 24.
8. Robinson, op. cit., The Expositor, (1898), p. 253, Ephesians, p. 42.

Finally, Robinson asks if there is not a real truth in his interpretation:

> "Is the head complete without the body? Without the Church the Christ is incomplete: and as the Church grows towards completion, the Christ grows towards completion; the Christ who in the Divine purpose must be 'all in all,' 'the Christ,' --- if we may so use the language of our own great poet --- 'that is to be.'"[1]

Such, then, is Robinson's position. We shall now proceed to examine his arguments and then shall mention further evidence for the passive sense of Pleroma in Ephesians i. 23.

(1) Robinson understands πληρουμένου as passive, "the Christ who all in all is being fulfilled," but it is also possible to interpret it as middle with an active sense, as the Authorized Version, the American Standard (Revised) Version, the Revised Standard Version, and Moffatt's translation have it. While there are no other instances in the New Testament, there are such in classical Greek where the middle voice of this verb must be understood in an active sense.[2] Moreover, does not the middle voice have a significance which fits the passage admirably? Meyer so interprets it. Even Abbott, who gives Pleroma an active signification in this passage, nevertheless says that πληρουμένου is middle and should be interpreted "for Himself." The thought itself is somewhat paralleled in Ephesians v. 27 where it is stated that Christ died for the Church "that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church."

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1. Ibid., The Expositor, (1898), pp. 251 f., and Ephesians, p. 43.

2. For example, Xenophon, Hellenica, V, iv, 56; Vi, ii, 14; Demosthenes, 1208, 14; 1221, 12.

(2) Robinson has the weight of evidence on his side regarding the translations in the early Egyptian and Latin Versions, but his argument regarding the Syriac Version is precarious. For it is based upon an Armenian translation of St. Ephraim's Commentary. And while, according to this, St. Ephraim may have taken πληρουμένου as passive, this may have been simply his interpretation. At any rate, the Peshito takes it as active, and if the original behind this had the word as passive, then we have to account for the change in the Peshito. In any case, while these early Versions are not to be disregarded, modern exegesis must often differ from them. Robinson also has the weight of the interpretations of Chrysostom and Origen on his side. But again, these Fathers were not infallible, as modern exegetes very well know.

(3) It is regarding Robinson's appeal to other Scripture passages that his argument seems most dubious. In the first place, is no distinction to be made at all between the Person of Christ and His purpose? The two seem to be unnecessarily confused throughout his discourse. But passing this by, his argument for the "identity" of Christ and the members of the Body is doubtful indeed. In I Corinthians xii, Paul's purpose is to put an end to the strife and divisions that had arisen in the Corinthian Church. The misunderstandings here spoken of had arisen regarding spiritual gifts. To show that whatever a person's spiritual gifts might be he was important, from the least to the greatest, he calls upon the analogy of the human anatomy. Because he mentions in the verses that follow the ear,

the eye, and the sense of smell as well as other parts which are considered more properly the body, are we therefore warranted in concluding that St. Paul has discarded the thought of Christ as the Head and the Church the body, and here has in mind that Christ is the Whole? It is possible to carry the details of a metaphor (as well as a parable) too far. St. Paul is not arguing "identity" but "unity." And this unity, as the context shows, is by the Holy Spirit:

> "For in one Spirit were we all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether bond or free; and were all made to drink of one Spirit."[1]

Further, at the conclusion of the illustration, he says:

> "Now ye are the body of Christ and severally members thereof."[2]

Has he here forgotten that in verse 12 (according to Robinson's argument) the members are not the Body but simply members of of it, since Christ is the Whole?

In like manner, when husbands are exhorted to love their wives as their own bodies, the Apostle is not arguing identity; he is but carrying out the figure of the preceding verses of Christ the Head and the Church, His Body,[3] even though the analogy of husband and wife is also added. As for "one flesh" being equivalent to "identity," the very figure should have precluded this. Neither are we warranted in saying

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1. I Cor. xii. 13.
2. I Cor. xii. 27.
3. Eph. v. 22-23.

that the Master intended that He is the Vine, the Whole, of which the branches are parts. This is far from obvious. In all cases the Apostle's teaching, and that of the Master, is not "identity" but "unity, concord, singleness of spirit," and in some instances "mystical union" comparable to St. Paul's "in Christ." But St. Paul's mysticism at its highest never reached the point of identity. There was no thought, such as was held in some quarters, of a merging into Deity.[1]

In regard to Ephesians i. 10, God's purpose "to sum up (literally to head up) all things in Christ," one should like to ask if no distinction at all can be made between God's purpose in Christ thought of as complete and His more general purpose for creation still in the process of realization? It is true enough, of course, that God's purpose in Christ has an eschatological aspect affecting all subsequent ages. The process of reconciliation which St. Paul envisaged, affecting Jew and Gentile,[2] all nature as well as human nature,[3] has begun and will not be complete until the last enemy is destroyed.[4] But this is quite different, it seems, from suggesting that "the Christ is not yet all that the Divine wisdom has determined He shall be." Besides, if we want to be technical, the aorist

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1. Cf. the statement by one of the Hermeticists: "Am I other than Thou? Thou art whatsoever I am; Thou art whatsoever I do and say." (Libellus V, 11. Scott, Hermetica, Vol. I, p. 165). Of course this is not to insinuate that Robinson had any such thought in mind.

2. Eph. ii. 16.

3. Rom. viii. 19 ff.

4. I Cor. xv. 26.

infinitive (ἀνακεφαλαιώσασθαι) suggests that the "heading up" of all things in Christ is already "realized," even though it does involve an eschatological aspect. Also, we might note that elsewhere when the Headship of Christ is spoken of, whether it be of the Church or of the universe, it is always as present fact.[1]

But it is the interpretation of Colossians i. 24 which calls for special emphasis. The first thing that strikes one regarding Robinson's view of it --- that "the Church, the completion of the Christ, is destined to complete His sufferings" --- is that the entire Epistle is against it. If Robinson were referring to the mystical sufferings of Christ in the Church thought of as incomplete, we could readily agree, but that this is not his meaning is evident in his discourse. He has in mind that the historical sufferings of Christ are to be thought of as leaving something for the Church to supplement, to fill up, to complete. He admits that the thought is "astounding" and "could never have occurred to a less generous spirit than St. Paul's." But if the verse be intended as Robinson interprets it, there is no statement which St. Paul would have been less likely to make, in Colossians of all places. No matter how many taunts were being launched against himself, he would never have defended his own sufferings by suggesting a deficiency in Christ's. L. S. Thornton has well said:

> "If St. Paul had actually taught the Colossians that the sufferings of Christ needed to be supplemented, he

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1. I Cor. xi. 3; Eph. i. 22; iv. 15; v. 23; Col. i. 18; ii. 10, 19.

> would have undercut the whole argument of this Epistle and played straight into the hands of the false teachers whom he was opposing."[1]

His greatest apologies, whether Romans, or Galatians, or Colossians, are based upon the one thesis, "The All-Sufficiency of Christ."

Lightfoot's interpretation that the Atoning sufferings of Christ are always designated by πάθημα and never θλίψις (used here), and that therefore St. Paul could justly speak of filling up the general hardships and afflictions which the Master endured, will not bear up under close examination, or at best is dubious, for there are passages where he uses the two words interchangeably.[2]

A more credible explanation is that St. Paul is speaking of the mystical sufferings of Christ in the Church, or, as he puts it, "in my flesh," and as over against such a deficit, he is glad to be able to add his full share. Abbott points out that had he been referring to other than the mystical sufferings, then the likelier syntax would have been:

> ἀνταναπληρῶ ἐν τῇ σαρκί μου . . . .[3]

Whereas what we have is:

> ἀνταναπληρῶ τὰ ὑστερήματα τῶν θλίψεων τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐν τῇ σαρκί μου . . . .

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1. Thornton, op. cit., p. 305.

2. This very verse, Col. i. 24; and II Cor. i. 3-7; and II Thess. i. 5-9. Cf. Phil. iii. 10 where he speaks of the "fellowship of the sufferings (παθημάτων) of Christ."

3. Abbott, op. cit., ad loc.

The deficit, then, is not in the historic sufferings of Christ, but in the historic sufferings of the Church, or, putting it otherwise, in the mystical sufferings of Christ.

St. Paul's first readers, surely, could not have missed his meaning. As we read between the lines, we see that probably the false teachers had spoken disparagingly of both the sufferings of Jesus and of the Apostle as proving their weakness in the face of the overpowering malign spirits of the universe. St. Paul has just pointed out in the preceding verses that much to the contrary, it was "through the blood of His cross," "in the body of His flesh through death," that the whole universe, including themselves, had been reconciled.[1] (If this were not true, then he well knew that nothing he might do or suffer would make the slightest difference to the fatal defect). He follows with an item about his own sufferings which he gladly endures for the sake of the Church.[2]

We may end this discussion of this verse with a statement from Professor Stewart:

> "Doubtless a deep truth lies in this picture of the sons of God helping Jesus to bear the sins of the world; but it is not what Paul meant. Never for a moment would he allow any obscuring of his central conviction that Christ had finished the work God had given Him to do. His life and death were all-sufficient. No supplement was required. Redemption was achieved. Reconciliation was an accomplished fact. What Paul refers to as being still 'lacking,' or 'imperfect,' was not the sacrifice and suffering of Christ, but it was his own fellowship with that sacrifice and suffering."[3]

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1. Col. i. 20-22. Compare especially ii. 13-15.

2. For other references to suffering for the Church, see Rom. viii. 17; II Cor. i. 5; xii. 15; Eph. iii. 13; Phil. i. 29-30; iii. 10; Col. iv. 3. Cf. I Thess. ii. 14-15 and II. Thess. i. 3-5.

3. Stewart, op. cit., p. 190.

(4) Robinson asks if there is not a real truth in the teaching that the Church is that which completes the Christ. "Is the head complete without a body?" Of course we can appreciate Robinson's viewpoint, for it appeals to our highest motives to do our part in our own day and generation for Christ's Kingdom, to carry on the noble work for which He so valiantly lived and died. Do not we have the Great Commission?[1] Must not we build upon the foundation that has been laid?[2] There is a real truth indeed in these statements. But this is quite different, it seems, from the assertion that "the Christ is incomplete" either in His Person or His historic work.

(5) Elsewhere the movement of Paul's thought is in three stages, from ourselves to Christ to God; or vice versa from God through Christ to us. Christ is the perfect Mediator. Thus, "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself."[3] The "fulness" of the Godhead dwells in Christ who in turn makes our lives "full."[4] Again, we are in God only as we are "in Christ."

"Your life is hid with Christ in God."[5]

"The head of every man is Christ; (and the head of the woman is the man); and the head of Christ is God."[6]

"All things are yours and ye are Christ's and Christ is God's."[7]

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1. Matt. xxviii. 19.
2. I Cor. iii. 12.
3. II. Cor. v. 19.
4. Col. ii. 9-10.
5. Col. iii. IO.
6. I Cor. xi. 3.
7. I Cor. iii. 22-23.

Again, "there is one Body. . . . one Lord. . . . one God."[1] Paul prays that the Philippians may be "filled with the fruits of righteousness which is through Jesus Christ to the glory and praise of God."[2] In that great paean of praise to Christ following the Kenosis passage, all things in heaven and on earth and under the earth unite in adoration of Him to the glory of God the Father.[3] At the consummation, "when all things have been subjected to Christ, then shall the Son also be subjected to the Father, that God may be all in all."[4]

In all of these passages, and others as well, the movement of thought is clear. Christ is the Mediator of the riches of God to man; or putting it in the reverse form, as we are in Him we are in God. But to suggest that His completeness comes from the other direction is to run counter to the general movement of Pauline thought.

(6) Both the immediate and the larger contexts are against any thought of the limitation of Christ. Indeed, the immediate context is portraying the very opposite. Christ's sovereignty over the universe, "all rule and authority and power and dominion and every name that is named, not only in this world but that which is to come," has just been affirmed. Meyer rightly says that "Κεφαλὴν ὑπὲρ πάντα admits no sort of limitation."[5] Robinson mentions the context in connection with

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1. Eph. iv. 5-6.
2. Phil. i. 11.
3. Phil. ii. 9-11.
4. I Cor. xv. 28.
5. Meyer, op. cit., ad loc.

his explanation of the last phrase, τὰ πάντα ἐν πᾶσι, which he takes in an adverbial sense, and says:

> "We feel its force the more when we read the whole context, and observe that it comes as a climax after two previous declarations of supremacy over 'all things': 'He hath put all things under His feet; and Him hath He given to be Head over all things. . . . All conceivable fulness, a completeness which sums up the universe, is predicated of the Christ as the issue of the Divine purpose."[1]

In passing we may note that the aorist tenses of all of the verbs in this section do not suggest "the issue" of Christ's sovereignty but present fact. Robinson's own words about the context are the very reason his interpretation does not fit, for to put at the end of these ascriptions of universal dominion a thought of limitation, a need for completion by the Church, is certainly not "a climax." Abbott, who takes Pleroma as active, recognizes this but says:

> "There is here no inconsistency in thought, although a superficial inconsistency in words, in fact an oxymoron."[2]

He does not explain further. One should like to ask him just how he avoids also an inconsistency in thought, unless we are to understand the statement as a paradox, i.e., that Christ who fills all in all is Himself completed by the Church.

When we look at the Epistle as a whole, the argument is the same. In Ephesians iv. 10 Paul expresses the universal

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1. Robinson, St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians, pp. 44 f. Cf. The Expositor, (1898), pp. 254 f.

2. Abbott, op. cit., ad loc.

relation into which Christ has entered by His exaltation from the lowest depth to the loftiest height, and the language resembles very closely that of i. 23:

> "He who descended is He who also ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things."

Ephesians iv. 13-16 suggests the completeness of Christ and the need of the Churchl to grow toward a corresponding perfection:

> ". . . . till we all attain unto the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a fullgrown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: that we. . . . may grow up in all things into Him, who is the Head, even Christ. . . ."

In Ephesians iii. 18-19, the love of Christ "which passeth knowledge" is closely associated with, indeed is inseparable from, "all the fulness of God." In Ephesians v. 27, it is stated that Christ gave Himself for the Church, "that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish," the inference being that He Himself is already of such a nature and is worthy of such a Bride.

(7) Nowhere else in the New Testament do we get any suggestion of deficiency in Christ or any suggestion that He can be supplemented. On the contrary, as we have already said, Paul's chief polemics converge on the one great issue of His absolute sufficiency.

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1. The "fullgrown man" in this passage refers not to individual maturity but to that of the Church as a whole, as the context shows.

(8) Nowhere else (to my knowledge) in Hebraic, or Hermetic, or Hellenistic writings is there any suggestion of limitation or deficiency on the part of the Logos, or of Wisdom, or of the Spirit of God, and accordingly no thought that men in any way supplement them. Rather, they are always presented as perfect agents, or expressions, of God. If we agree from the last chapter that Paul sometimes used Logos and Wisdom terminology and concepts to describe the reality which he had found in Christ, it is not likely that he would employ language which said less, or at least might suggest less, than was being claimed by others for the Logos and Wisdom. On the contrary, the only reason he employed such terms and concepts at all was to heighten the estimate of his readers for Christ, since such terms and concepts were generally understood in religious circles. This argument is extra-Scriptural, but it is not without due weight.

For these reasons, then, we conclude that the weight of evidence is on the side of a passive sense of Pleroma in Ephesians i. 23.[1]

But how, one may well ask, are we to think of Christ as "filling all in all"? The most plausible answer seems to be that in Paul's thought and experience Christ and the Holy Spirit are correlated. It would be a mistake to assume, as some have, that the Apostle identifies the two. There are a few passages which, if taken alone, might suggest this,

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1. Reference is made also to F. R. M. Hitchcock's article, "The Pleroma as the Medium of the Self-Realization of Christ," The Expositor, Vol. XXIV, pp. 135 ff.

especially II Corinthians iii. 17, "Now the Lord is the Spirit." But on the other hand there are an overwhelming number of passages where the Persons are clearly distinct.[1] Yet, to Paul the experience was one. If we may refer to the Fourth Gospel,[2] it was the Holy Spirit who took of the things of Christ and showed them unto him. To experience the "newness of life"[3] in Christ was to know also the power of the Holy Spirit. To take only one striking example of the correlation, we may turn to Ephesians iii. 17-19:

> ". . . . that ye may be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be strong to apprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that ye may be filled with all the fulness of God."

Here it is seen that the indwelling Spirit is most closely correlated with the indwelling Christ --- also with the experience of the love of Christ which passeth knowledge and being "filled with all the fulness of God."[4]

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1. Rom. viii. 11; I Cor. xii. 3; II Cor. v. 5; and other passages; also many where the Spirit is spoken of alone, e.g., Gal. v. 16-26. On this whole discussion see Scott, The Spirit in the New Testament, pp. 177 ff.; Stewart, op. cit., pp. 307 ff.; and Davies, op. cit., pp. 177 ff.

2. John xvi. 14.

3. Rom. vi. 4; II Cor. v. 17.

4. C. J. Barker, The Way of Life, pp. 110 f., has an unusual explanation of this passage. He translates, "that ye may be fulfilled (or perfected) to form the fulness of God." "The writer is not stating that each man may individually acquire the perfection of God: for divine perfection is always and inevitably other than human perfection; what he is asserting is that when all men reach their full moral and spiritual stature, then, and only then, will they by their union with God have formed that 'fulness' which is God and redeemed man." But I cannot agree that this thought was the Apostle's intention.

Some have found a different answer to Christ's "filling all things" and interpret it as referring to His all-embracing love or His all-inclusive purpose to bring peace and concord universally.[1] But it is more credible that Paul so correlates Christ and the Holy Spirit, and likewise all thought of God the Father, as to think of Christ as omnipresent also. The faith and experience of the Church is not different today. We should say, however, that the entire concept of God's "filling all things" is a spiritual concept and not physical; there is no conflation of space and Deity as was common with the Hermeticists and the Gnostics.[2]

The significance of Pleroma in Ephesians i. 23, so interpreted, and in other passages as well,[3] to the Church and to the individual Christian becomes apparent. The Church has been chosen of God as the special object of His love and the instrument of His purpose. Therefore His Presence is experienced in the Church in a unique way. According to Diogenes Laertius, the Stoics taught that God filled all things as Reason; "only there is a difference of degree; in some parts there is more of it, in others less."[4] Even so, while the divine activity is not confined to the Church, it is the Church and not the universe that is His Pleroma, for the former is filled in a singular way by His Person and graces. We should not, with

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1. This is Porter's view, op. cit., pp. 187-190; 193-195; and in general.

2. See Irenaeus, op. cit., II, i, 5; and many other places. For the view of the Hermeticists, see the quotations from the Hermetica in Chapter I.

3. Eph. iii. 19; iv. 13; Col. ii. 9-10; and John i. 16.

4. Diogenes Laertius, VII, 137-138.

some, think only of the impartation of graces and energies. Surely this is not to take into account the full significance of St. Paul's mysticism. The graces are present because they naturally and necessarily accompany the Person.[1]

If we have been correct in suggesting that Pleroma was a term of rather general usage and is not to be thought of as known only in Colossae, then perhaps this determined St. Paul's employment of it in his Epistle to the Ephesians also, which, let us remember, was likely a circular letter. If the above is true, then a statement from H. L. Mansel throws light upon the term as used in both Epistles:

> "The choice of this term may have been dictated by a desire to turn the minds of his readers from a false to a true use of it, to remind them that the true Pleroma, the place of those united with God, was not in that mystic region of spirits where the Gnostics placed it, nor to be attained to, as they asserted, by knowledge only; that the body of Christian believers was the true Pleroma of God --- the place which God fills with His Presence; and that the bond of union which raised man to it was not knowledge, but love."[2]

Also, the following statement from S. D. F. Salmond deserves special emphasis:

> "Here (Ephesians i. 23) the conception is that this plenitude of the divine powers and qualities which is in Christ is imparted by Him to His Church, so that the latter is pervaded by His Presence, animated by His life, filled with His gifts and energies and graces. . . . He is the Head of the Church which receives from Him what He Himself possesses and is endowed by Him with all that it requires for the realization of its vocation."[3]

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1. This is the point which John Oman makes so strongly in his book, Grace and Personality. God's grace is simply God being gracious.

2. Mansel, The Gnostic Heresies, p. 52.

3. Salmond, EGT, Ephesians, ad loc.

In like manner, as Christ indwells His Church, so He indwells the individual Christian. The statement just quoted from Salmond is equally true of the Christian as an individual. Indeed, it is true of the Church as a whole because it is true of the believers who compose its membership. Life is brought to full realization in Him, and without Him is incomplete.

"In Him ye are made full (complete)"[1]

If God is "the one in whom we live and move and have our being;"[2] and if Christ is "the reality" behind all form and "shadow,"[3] then it follows that a life can only fully realize itself when Christ is realized within it. This is what Paul means by the comparison of being "dead through trespasses"[4] and "alive with Christ."[5] The same general thought is also emphasized by the Fourth Evangelist:

> "I came that they may have life, and may have it abundantly."[6]

> "And we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth. . . . And of His fulness have we all received, grace upon grace."[7]

It is the same thought which is expressed so aptly in one of our hymns:

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1. Col. ii. 10.
2. Acts xvii. 28.
3. Col. ii. 17.
4. Col. ii. 13; Cf. Eph. ii. 1, 5.
5. Col. ii. 13; Cf. Eph. ii. 1, 5; Rom. vi. 5-11; viii. 10, 13.
6. John x. 10. Cf. I. John v. 12.
7. John i. 14-16.

"O fill me with Thy fulness, Lord,
Until my very heart o'erflow
In kindling thought and glowing word,
Thy love to tell, Thy praise to show."1

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1. Frances Ridley Havergal, in Scottish Psalter and Church Hymnary, Revised Edition, No. 338.

PART TWO

K E N O S I S

"And therein (in the books of the Platonists) I read, not indeed in these words, but to the same purpose, enforced by many and divers reasons, that 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.' . . . . But that 'the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us,' I read not there. For I traced in those books, said differently and in many ways, that 'the Son was in the form of the Father, and thought it not robbery to be equal with God,' because naturally He was the Same Substance. But that 'He emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men, and found in fashion as a man, humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross: wherefore God exalted Him' from the dead, 'and gave Him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that the Lord Jesus Christ is in the glory of God the Father,' those books do not contain."[1]

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1. The Confessions of St. Augustine, Book VII, Chapter ix.

CHAPTER V.

AN EXAMINATION OF PHILIPPIANS ii. 5-11.

. . . . ὃς ἐν μορφῇ Θεοῦ ὑπάρχων οὐχ ἁρπαγμὸν
ἡγήσατο τὸ εἶναι ἴσα Θεῷ, ἀλλ' ἑαυτὸν ἐκένωσε,
μορφὴν δούλου λαβών, ἐν ὁμοιώματι ἀνθρώπων
γενόμενος· καὶ σχήματι εὑρεθεὶς ὡς ἄνθρωπος
ἐταπείνωσεν ἑαυτόν, γενόμενος ὑπήκοος μέχρι
θανάτου, θανάτου δὲ σταυροῦ. (ii. 6-8).

". . . . who, existing in the form of God, counted not equality with God a highly prized possession, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, becoming in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man He humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death, yea the death of a cross!"

A. The Context.

These verses occur in a most undogmatic setting. The primary purpose of the letter was not theological, but simply to say a loving "thank you" for the gift which had been sent to him by the Philippians at the hand of Epaphroditus.[1] At the same time, he takes the occasion to give various exhortations, which begin in i. 27. Among these is the call to humility and self-sacrifice. The little rift between Euodia and Syntyche may have been in mind.[2] As an illustration of supreme humility and self-sacrifice, he cites the example of the marvelous condescension of our Lord. Paul's object was practical rather than theological. No doubt he himself would

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1. See. iv. 18.
2. Cf. ii. 2 and iv. 2.

have been greatly surprised could he have foreseen that his illustration would become the basis of profound Christological study and such a variety of opinions.

B. Exegetical Notes.[1]

ὃς. Epexegetical, referring to Christ, the subject of what is to follow. It is variously interpreted as referring to either the Pre-existent Christ or the Incarnate Christ. This can only be determined by subsequent phrases and the general interpretation of the passage. In this writer's view the subject here and through verse 7 is the Pre-existent Christ, for reason which will be mentioned later.

ὑπάρχων . . . . Indicating prior existence but not necessarily Pre-existence. Its meaning is simply "being originally," or "being from the first." It is thus distinguished from the simple participle, ὤν , "being." In later Greek this distinction is not so clearly drawn and ὑπάρχων is frequently used meaning no more than ὤν . In the New Testament there are a few times when ὑπάρχων is used when ὤν would serve just as well.[2] But usually in the New Testament the above distinction holds true and the former participle is used

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1. So many varied views have been expressed on this passage that the wiser policy seems to simply present my own conclusions, referring to the opinions of others only when there is some special reason to do so. At the same time I would acknowledge my indebtedness to not a few, among whom I would mention especially: Lohmeyer, Kommentar zum Neuen Testament, Philipper, (Meyer's Series); and his fuller treatment of this passage in Kyrios Jesus; Lowther Clarke, New Testament Problems, pp. 141 ff.; Hunter, op. cit., pp. 45 ff.; Lightfoot, The Epistles of St. Paul, Philippians; and Gifford, The Incarnation.

2. Luke viii. 41; xvi. 23; xxiii. 50; Acts x. 12; and Romans iv. 19.

purposely to designate "originally" or "from the first."[1] However, rather than Pre-existence, this could conceivably refer to the beginning of the Incarnate life, as some have understood it, notably the Lutheran school.

Gifford contends that ὑπάρχων, being the imperfect, denotes "continued existence," overlapping, as it were, with the subsequent aorists.[2] Thus he interprets the passage as meaning that Christ Jesus, existing from the first (pre-Incarnate) in the form of God, continued in the form of God while also taking the form of a servant, becoming in the likeness of men, etc. He makes the word equivalent to unchangeableness of nature or status regardless of subsequent verbs. In most of the examples he cites,[3] this is true by the very nature of the cases involved. But it is doubtful that we can accept this as an infallible rule. For example, the lame man at the gate of the temple[4] who was "lame from the first (ὑπάρχων) from his mother's womb," did not continue in this state but entered the temple "walking and leaping and praising God." Then too, other forms of the verb besides the imperfect participle do not suggest a necessarily permanent condition, and in fact a change is desirable with reference to the divisions existing (ὑπάρχειν) in the Corinthian church,[5] and again with reference to the condition of those who are (ὑπάρχοντι) destitute and in need

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1. Luke xi. 13; xvi. 14; Acts ii. 30; iii. 2; vii. 55; viii. 16; xvi. 3, 20, 37; xvii. 24, 29; xix. 36; xxi. 20; xxii. 3; I Cor. xi. 7; xii. 22; Gal. i. 14; ii. 14; etc.

2. Gifford, op. cit., p. 8.

3. Luke xxiii. 50; Acts ii. 30; II Cor. viii. 17; xii. 16; Rom. iv. 19; I Cor. xi. 7, Gal. i. 14 and ii. 14.

4. Acts iii. 1-10.

5. I Cor. xi. 18.

of daily food.[1] Therefore we conclude that while the conditions suggested by ὑπάρχων may continue through the subsequent verbs, this is not necessarily the case. Such conditions may be superceded by subsequent events.

ἐν μορφῇ θεοῦ. . . . "in the form of God." μορφή refers to the true manifestation of Essence. Lightfoot has carefully examined the classical uses of μορφή and its distinction from σχῆμα.[2] He has shown, conclusively I think, that the two words are used with purposeful distinction in the New Testament. We may summarize by saying that μορφή expresses the true nature of whatever it manifests. It is not identical with essence, but is the genuine expression of essence; it is the phenomenon which strikes the senses and enables one to know unmistakably the essence behind the phenomenon. μορφή never deceives. In this respect it may differ from σχῆμα which denotes the fashion or figure of a thing which may or may not correspond to true essence. For example, a statue may have the σχῆμα of a man, but it is not a man. But on the other hand, σχῆμα does not necessarily denote something false to reality. To use the figure before us, while it could refer to a statue of a man, it could also refer to a man. Lightfoot says that σχῆμα may signify:

> ". . . . 'habitus,' dress or costume. . . . attitude or demeanour. . . . pomp, display, outward circumstance. . . . semblance, pretence. . . . something fleeting, changeable, unsubstantial."[3]

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1. James ii. 15.

2. Lightfoot, The Epistles of St. Paul, Philippians, pp. 125 ff.

3. Ibid.

Because μορφή is not identical with essence, but is merely the true expression of essence, it is conceivable that essence may express itself in more than one "form." To use an illustration from Jeremiah, the potter is able to make from a lump of clay one "form" of vessel, or, if that is unsatisfactory, to remake it into another "form," the essence remaining the same.[1] Or, to use a rather crude illustration, water may exist as a liquid, a solid, or a gas without any change of essence. So here, we differ from Gifford[2] and any others who maintain that ἐν μορφῇ θεοῦ could not be surrendered without the surrender of Essence. They argue that there was not an exchange of μορφὴν θεοῦ for μορφὴν δούλου, but Christ "added to" His "divine form" the "form of a servant." Thus the Incarnate Christ is conceived as having two μορφαί, an incongruous thought. The very way in which μορφὴ θεοῦ and μορφὴ δούλου are set over against each other in contrast seems to indicate that the author had in mind the exchange of one for the other.

οὐχ ἁρπαγμὸν ἡγήσατο τὸ εἶναι ἴσα θεῷ. . . . Whereas ἐν μορφῇ θεοῦ refers to divine Essence, τὸ εἶναι ἴσα θεῷ refers to the divine state or condition. As to whether the latter is to be understood as necessarily correlative to the former depends upon what view is taken of ἁρπαγμόν which we now proceed to discuss.

The problem is two-fold:

(1) Whether ἁρπαγμόν is to be regarded as (a) active,

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1. Jeremiah xviii. 4; Cf. Romans ix. 21. I do not mean to infer that the word is actually used in these passages.

2. Gifford, op. cit., pp. 14 ff.

and thus indicating a process, a "seizing" after something which He did not already possess; or (b) passive, and thus meaning a "prize" or "valued possession" which was already His, but which He refused to cling to as such, but on the contrary pursued an opposite course.

(2) If we take (b) above, there is a further complication, whether He is (a) making a claim --- ". . . . who, being in the form of God, considered it not robbery that He was equal with God," for this was His by right, by reason of His nature; "nevertheless He emptied Himself. . . ." --- or (b) whether He is making a renunciation --- ". . . . who, being in the form of God, considered not being on an equality with God a highly prized possession" to be clung to at all cost and without consideration of others, "but emptied Himself. . . ."

Let us first dispose of the second problem mentioned. Lutheran theology, ascribing the entire passage to the Incarnate Christ as a claim, has used this clause in proof of His Deity and has interpreted it as meaning that, being divine by nature, He did not consider it robbery or usurpation that He was equal with God. Some scholars have read it likewise as a claim, though attributing it to the pre-Incarnate Christ. Against such an interpretation we may say first that it destroys the balance of the clauses and of the argument. It is evident that οὐχ is balanced in contrast to ἀλλά. He did not seek to retain His exalted dignity but on the contrary renounced it. If the clause be interpreted as a claim, then the natural comparison is broken, and instead of ἀλλά we must understand ἀλλ' ὅμως,

"nevertheless," which is possible but not likely. Furthermore, to make this clause a claim instead of a renunciation is to introduce the renunciation too late in the sentence and to miss the point of the context to this extent, for we are led to expect at once an instance of self-abnegation exemplifying the principle set forth in verse 4, "not looking each to his own things, but each also to the things of others." Lightfoot rightly observes:

> "For the Apostle is there enforcing the duty of humility, and when he adds 'Have the mind which was in Christ Jesus,' we expect this appeal to our great Example to be followed immediately by a reference, not to the right which He claimed, but to the dignity which He renounced."[1]

Also, the emphatic position given to οὐχ ἁρπαγμὸν ἡγήσατο is entirely unexplained as a "claim" and can only be accounted for as emphasizing what He renounced. To make this clause a claim instead of a renunciation is to throw the whole thought and purpose of the Apostle, or the composer, out of gear. The Lutheran school did not need to stake a claim for the Deity of the Incarnate Christ on this clause, there being abundant other evidence in the New Testament.

The more vexing problem is whether ἁρπαγμόν is to be construed as active or passive and therefore whether respectively equality with God was something not in the possession of Christ, which He might have grasped for had He been so inclined; or whether it was His prized possession which He refused to

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1. Lightfoot, The Epistles of St. Paul, Philippians, p. 132.

jealously retain. Gifford, who has done such excellent work in many regards in his discourse on this passage, misses the point entirely here in assuming that what Christ emptied Himself of was His status of equality with God, which therefore of necessity was in His previous possession.[1] He fails to mention the possibility that the meaning might be that Christ, being divine by nature, nevertheless subordinate to the Father, refused to grasp at equality. Such a view has not a few supporters.[2]

The active ending of the word would most naturally suggest also an active sense, denoting a process, "a seizing after equality" which He declined. Unfortunately, only one example from anywhere near the time of St. Paul has come down to us, from Plutarch,[3] and here it apparently has an active sense. Both Eusebius and Cyril of Alexandria use the word in its active form but with a passive meaning,[4] but this is late; and then, too, they may have been drawing upon their interpretation of the very passage before us.

In any case, we cannot base any momentous decision upon the one instance from Plutarch. It is further well known that often a word with an active ending is used in a passive sense, and vice versa, even when the other form is available as in this case.[5] Many therefore take ἁρπαγμόν in a passive

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1. Gifford, op. cit., pp. 28 ff.

2. Meyer, op. cit., ad loc.; Kennedy, EGT, ad loc.; Dibelius, HzNT, ad loc.; Lohmeyer, op. cit., Kommentar, ad loc.; Kyrios Jesus, pp. 20 ff.; Michael, MNTC, ad loc.; and others.

3. Plutarch, Moralia, par. 12A.

4. For these references see Lightfoot, The Epistles of St. Paul, Philippians, ad loc., and Vincent, ICC, ad loc.

5. For examples, see Gifford, op cit., pp. 32 ff.

sense as though it had been ἅρπαγμα. This view is summarized by Lightfoot:

> "The more usual form of the word is ἅρπαγμα, which properly signifies simply 'a piece of plunder,' but especially with such verbs as ἡγεῖσθαι, ποιεῖσθαι, νομίζειν, etc., is employed like ἕρμαιον, εὕρημα, to denote 'a highly-prized possession, an unexpected gain. . . . the idea of plunder or robbery having passed out of sight."[1]

Having cited the reference from Plutarch and a few instances from the Church Fathers where they used the active form in a passive sense, he concludes:

> "Under these circumstances, we may, in choosing between the two senses of ἁρπαγμός, fairly assign to it here the one which best suits the context."[2]

This, to him, is the passive sense. He further points out that if equality with God had not been already in the possession of Christ, then the refusal to grasp after it would not in itself have been an act of humility. There is no special self-abnegation in refusing to grasp for equality with God if one does not possess it.[3]

However, it is impossible from a purely exegetical standpoint to decide between the two views, so that the choice becomes largely a matter of personal preference and general interpretation of the passage as a whole. Lohmeyer, who has made such a careful study of this passage, concludes that

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1. Lightfoot, The Epistles of St. Paul, Philippians, ad loc.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid., detached note, p. 135.

ἁρπαγμός should have an active sense, and that the meaning is:

> ". . . . etwa, als Beute betrachten oder wie man deutsch sagen würde, als gefundenes Fressen ansehen, eine Gelegenheit beim Schopfe ergreifen oder ähnliches."[1]

He thinks that in the general background are the stories of those who sought to usurp God's sovereignty and were cast down. He makes mention of Iranian cosmology and mythology and Jewish concepts of Satan and the evil angels which, allegedly, sought to overcome God. Also he mentions the case of Adam who was tempted with, "Ye shall be as gods."[2] The theory is that in contrast to all such powers which sought by violence or other unlawful means to overthrow God, the writer presents Christ as taking an opposite course, one of self-abnegation, by which, paradoxically, He received the Lordship over all things, and presumably equality.[3]

It is to be most seriously questioned whether mythology, whether Iranian or Jewish or whatever its source, had any part in the thought of the writer. Some German scholars have been much too quick to relate Christianity to extraneous sources, although Lohmeyer is not to be placed among the extreme ones. The Adam comparison is also dubious, about which we shall have more to say later. At the same time, it is to be admitted that an active sense of ἁρπαγμόν is quite possible, and this may be

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1. Lohmeyer, Kyrios Jesus, p. 21.
2. Genesis iii. 5.
3. Lohmeyer, Kyrios Jesus, pp. 20 ff.

the true interpretation. Our problem is not clarified by appealing to other New Testament passages, for whereas there are many which speak of Christ and the Father in such a way as to suggest equality, there are others which speak of the Son as subordinate to the Father.[1] All things considered, I side with Lightfoot in thinking it more probable that the writer envisaged ἁρπαγμόν simply as a highly prized possession which Christ readily relinquished in view of His noble mission. So interpreted, μορφὴ θεοῦ would mean that the pre-Incarnate Christ had the true Essence of God, while ἴσα θεῷ would assert correspondingly His divine state or condition.

ἀλλ' ἑαυτὸν ἐκένωσε . . . . In contrast to the possible attitude which He might have held, He instead emptied Himself. The emphatic position of ἑαυτὸν shows that the act was entirely voluntary. No Genitive is expressed to designate precisely what it was of which He emptied Himself. The expression is simply a graphic way of picturing Christ's complete self-renunciation. But while the Kenosis is not defined, it is described in the clauses that follow.

μορφὴν δούλου λαβών, ἐν ὁμοιώματι ἀνθρώπων γενόμενος· These clauses are coincident in time with ἐκένωσε. They describe a single act, namely, the Incarnation. The first clause, as we have seen, is set in emphatic contrast to μορφὴ θεοῦ, with which it is exchanged. The equivalent

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1. Especially I Cor. xv. 28.

thought is expressed in II Corinthians viii. 9:

> "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might become rich."

In this passage it is perfectly evident that change of Essence is not the thought. The same Person is the subject, first rich, later poor. The difference is only in outward conditions or state. ἐν ὁμοιώματι ἀνθρώπων γενόμενος is epexegetical of the previous clause. It is this which makes it doubly clear, if there has been any doubt about it, that ὅς refers to the pre-Incarnate Christ. For how could He become in the likeness of men unless prior to this He was not in the likeness of men? The only way that it could be explained otherwise, as by the Lutheran School, would be to add an adjective mentally and to have the passage mean that although in the Incarnate state He was divine, He became in the <u>true</u> likeness of men, a man among men, as it were. But this is forced exegesis. The natural meaning is that there was a time when He was not in the likeness of men, but at the Incarnation became so. There is no intended suggestion of Docetism in either ὁμοιώματι or σχήματι (in the clause that follows), as some have alleged. The writer's purpose was doubtless to suggest that although He became "in the likeness of men" and "was found in fashion as a man," His humanity did not fully explain Him. Behind all outward appearances of manhood, there was something more.

> Καὶ σχήματι εὑρεθεὶς ὡς ἄνθρωπος ἐταπείνωσεν ἑαυτόν. . . . I take Καὶ σχήματι εὑρεθεὶς as introducing

the next stage of the Kenosis rather than with what precedes, as some prefer. ἐν ὁμοιώματι ἀνθρώπων γενόμενος seems logically to close the first stage and καὶ σχήματι εὑρεθεὶς ὡς ἄνθρωπος to open the following stage, which took place historically in the Incarnate Lord. "Being found in fashion as a man He humbled Himself still further. . . ."

γενόμενος ὑπήκοος μέχρι θανάτου. . . . Probably not obedient to Death, personified, as Lohmeyer and some others suggest, but obedient to God to the limit of death. Death was thought of as the extreme limit of devotion and self-sacrifice.

θανάτου δὲ σταυροῦ. But death was not the extreme limit; it was death on a cross![1] By this phrase St. Paul emphasizes the utter depth of Christ's condescension.[2]

C. The Background of This Passage.

Professor A. M. Hunter says of this passage:

> "Few passages in the New Testament have claimed more ink than this, and the exegesis of details and of the whole has been much disputed."[3]

The pioneering work of others in this field, with particular mention of Lohmeyer, enables us to take a few things for granted or as highly probable. Chief among these is the theory that we have here one of the early Christian hymns, familiar

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1. On the shame of the cross, cf., Deut. xxi. 23; Gal. iii. 13; Hebrews xii. 2; Cicero, In Verrem, v, 64 ff., and Pro Rabirio, v. 10. Michael quotes the passages from Cicero, op cit., ad loc.

2. Even if this is a hymn being quoted by St. Paul, this phrase is out of balance with the rest and was likely from the Apostle himself. See below.

3. Hunter, op. cit., p. 45.

to both St. Paul and his readers, which the Apostle quotes to illustrate his exhortation on humility. The rhythmical flow of language and balance of phrases leave little doubt but that it was designed as a hymn. The following is the arrangement suggested by Lohmeyer:[1]

(1) [Ὁ] ἐν μορφῇ Θεοῦ ὑπάρχων
οὐχ ἁρπαγμὸν ἡγήσατο
τὸ εἶναι ἴσα θεῷ

(2) ἀλλὰ ἑαυτὸν ἐκένωσεν
μορφὴν δούλου λαβών
ἐν ὁμοιώματι ἀνθρώπων γενόμενος

(3) καὶ σχήματι εὑρεθεὶς ὡς ἄνθρωπος
ἐταπείνωσεν ἑαυτόν
γενόμενος ὑπήκοος μέχρι θανάτου
[θανάτου δὲ σταυροῦ].

(4) διὸ καὶ ὁ Θεὸς αὐτὸν ὑπερύψωσεν
καὶ ἐχαρίσατο αὐτῷ
τὸ ὄνομα τὸ ὑπὲρ πᾶν ὄνομα

(5) ἵνα ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι Ἰησοῦ
πᾶν γόνυ κάμψῃ
ἐπουρανίων καὶ ἐπιγείων καὶ καταχθονίων

(6) καὶ πᾶσα γλῶσσα ἐξομολογήσηται
ὅτι Κύριος Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς
εἰς δόξαν Θεοῦ πατρός.

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1. Lohmeyer, Kyrios Jesus, pp. 5 f. This is found also in Hunter, op. cit., pp. 46 f., and Clarke, op. cit., pp. 143 f.

That St. Paul paused in his dictation to compose a lyrical poem, or even highly polished and perfectly balanced prose, is most unlikely, and the probability is that he was quoting a hymn which he and his readers had sung together many times in their services when he was among them.[1]

St. Paul may or may not have been the originator of the hymn. There are some words and phrases which appear to be un-Pauline[2] so that the probability is that he was quoting a hymn which owed its origin to someone else in the early Church.

Only one phrase breaks the rhythmical flow of language, and that is θανάτου δὲ σταυροῦ. The supposition is that the Apostle added this himself as a kind of parenthesis as he dictated the letter to his amanuensis, somewhat similar to I Corinthians xv. 56 which presumably is a sentence thrown in by Paul himself into the midst of a quotation which he was rendering.[3] Whereas the hymn said that Christ was "obedient unto death," indicating this as the utmost limit of self-sacrifice, the Apostle added "yea, death on a cross." This fact becomes very interesting indeed if we take the hymn as a whole as originating from someone else, for it shows that at least the depth of the Kenosis, the bottom rung, comes directly from the Apostle.

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1. Acts xvi. 11-40; xx. 1-6.

2. We shall not enter upon a discussion of this here. On the un-Pauline elements in this passage, reference is made to Lohmeyer, Kyrios Jesus, pp. 8 f.; Hunter, op. cit., p. 48; and Clarke, op. cit., pp. 145 f.

3. See Lohmeyer, Kyrios Jesus, p. 45; and Clarke, op. cit., p. 145.

Some think that the hymn was composed originally in Aramaic and that here we simply have the Greek translation.[1] This is quite possible though proof is lacking.

We shall merely mention and pass by two hypothetical points made by Lohmeyer, the first being that in the background of the hymn lies a cosmogonic myth parallel to that of the Iranian Ormuzd and Ahriman, the latter of which refused to be subject to anyone and so created his own world --- which, of course, is taken as a contrast to Christ; and the second being the supposition that in verse 8, there is in the background a conception of the mythical primal man, the Urmensch, an idea of widespread prevalence, though not in any clear-cut and logical fashion. It is very doubtful that these, or any other mythical sources, played any direct part in the molding of Christian theology as some have alleged, though it is natural that on the fringes some attempts would be made at syncretism. The Epistle to the Colossians shows this. At the same time the Christian religion owes its endurance largely to the very fact that it held itself aloof and distinct from the pagan religions around it. The whole question is a big one upon which we cannot enter here. It is sufficient to say that the above views put forward by Lohmeyer can neither be proved or disproved. They are only matters of opinion. Regarding the second, however, we may add a statement from Lowther Clarke:

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1. See the Aramaic reconstruction by P. P. Levertoff in Clarke's book, op. cit., p. 148.

> "In particular, the whole conception of the Urmensch is shrouded in obscurity. The documents on which those who argue along these lines rely are of doubtful provenance and date."[1]

A more credible theory is that the writer had in mind a comparison between the first Adam (Genesis iii. 5) and the Second, that is, if the active sense of ἁρπαγμόν is to be pressed. As we have already mentioned, the idea put forward in such a comparison is that whereas the first Adam succumbed to the temptation, "Ye shall be as gods," the Second Adam pursued the very opposite course, "counting not equality with God a thing to be seized." Not a few theologians have found this to be the meaning.[2] Professor A. M. Hunter argues that if there is such a comparison, as he thinks, then perhaps the idea of all the Adam comparisons is to be traced to the Primitive Community rather than thought of as originating with St. Paul.[3] The general thesis of his book is well taken whether or not he is correct in this particular instance.

To be said in favor of such a comparison are the following considerations:

(1) The other Adam comparisons by St. Paul.[4]

(2) The active ending of ἁρπαγμόν. This has already been sufficiently discussed.

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1. Clarke, op. cit., p. 149.

2. Dorner, Christliche Glaubenslehre, Vol. II, pp. 286 f.; Beyschlag, Neutestamentliche Theologie, 2 Aufl., Vol. II, p. 88; Briggs, Messiah of the Apostles, p. 180; Loofs, article "Kenosis," Hastings's Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics; Rawlinson, The New Testament Doctrine of the Christ, pp. 133 ff.; Duncan, Son of Man, pp. 193 f.; and others.

3. Hunter, op. cit., pp. 45 ff.

4. Rom. v. 14-19; I Cor. xv. 22; 45-49.

(3) It is suggested that scholars have read too much into the meaning of μορφή as denoting the true essence of whatever it is manifesting, and that the word denoted merely the "fashion," or "figure," or "image" of something. It is equivalent to the Aramaic "demoutha" (Hebrew "demouth"), which in turn would be equivalent to the "image" of God in the first Adam (Genesis i. 26). This is further borne out by the Peshito's rendering of the Philippians passage where μορφή is translated "demoutha."[1]

These considerations are not to be taken lightly, and such a comparison may have been in the writer's mind. Our problem is made more difficult by the fact that by the very nature of the case, there is a natural contrast between the course taken by Adam and that taken by Christ, whether the writer had it in mind or not. I find it difficult to think that he did, for the following reasons:

(1) There is no real thought in the Genesis passage of equality with God in an absolute sense. The words, "Ye shall be as gods," are further qualified by "knowing good and evil." Is it conceivable by any stretch of the imagination that Adam thought he might achieve equality in an absolute sense?[2]

(2) The theory is based on the active interpretation of ἁρπαγμόν, that the writer was thinking of the pre-Incarnate Christ as below equality with God. This may be true, but con-

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1. For this information I am indebted to Hunter, op. cit., p. 49, footnote 1; and Duncan, Son of Man, p. 193, footnote 3.

2. On this see Vincent, ICC, Philippians, ad loc.

clusive evidence is lacking on either side in the New Testament.

(3) This carries the Adam comparison back to the pre-temporal scene. It is very doubtful whether St. Paul ever intended the concept of the second Adam to be carried back to the heavenly sphere. To him, the Second Adam was second because temporally He was later than the first; because He took upon Himself the flesh of the first and undid, as it were, the consequences of Adam's sin. Of course the Apostle thought of Christ as Pre-existent, but this was as Pre-existent Son, not Pre-existent Man. One passage, I Corinthians xv. 47-48, might suggest on the surface another conclusion:

> "The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly."

Some have understood this as an identification of Christ with some current concept of a "Heavenly Man," whether the thought came from Philo or elsewhere.[1] But I do not think that the purpose of the Apostle, as shown by the context, will bear this out. He is answering the objection to the doctrine of the resurrection which was based on the argument that a bodily resurrection would be impossible and unthinkable. St. Paul endeavors to show that the resurrection body is to be different in kind, a spiritual body. He then brings in the Adam comparison to say that whereas we have borne the physical body through the

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1. On this see William Manson, op. cit., pp. 178 ff.

first Adam, so we shall bear the spiritual, heavenly body through the Second, who is to us "a life-giving spirit" since He is spiritual by nature, His origin being in heaven. But I do not think we are warranted in saying that a pre-temporal Adam is conceived. The thought of the Apostle is not unlike that recorded by the Fourth Evangelist:

> "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth hath eternal life. I am the bread of life. Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness and they died. This is the bread which cometh down out of heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die."[1]

In any case, the reference in the Kenosis passage to Christ's "becoming in the likeness of men," and in Romans to His being "of the seed of David according to the flesh,"[2] equivalent to the Fourth Evangelist's, "The Word became flesh,"[3] is sufficient evidence that the writers were not thinking of Christ as pre-existent Man.

Therefore, the only way the alleged comparison in the Philippians passage can be drawn is to say that there is a contrast between the first Adam and the Pre-existent Son who later became the Second Adam. But possibly all of this is to be too technical.

(4) The writer of the hymn most certainly was relating Christ with the Servant of Deutero-Isaiah, as the language bears out. We shall have more to say about this presently. If we bring in the Adam comparison, then we have two figures before

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1. John vi. 47-50.
2. Rom. i. 3.
3. John i. 14.

us instead of one, which is possible but not natural.

(5) If μορφή was the equivalent of the Aramaic "demoutha," the Hebrew "demouth" (צֶלֶם is used in Genesis i. 26-27), and the Greek εἰκών, and therefore in the Philippians passage suggests the resemblance to the first Adam who also was created in the "image" of God, is it not strange that the Greek translator of the hymn did not use εἰκών according to the LXX rendering of Genesis i. 26-27? Or did he fail to see the Adam comparison? However, there is other evidence that he was not thinking in terms of the LXX, as we shall see presently.

(6) So far as our records go, the first writer who saw in the Philippians passage a contrast between the first Adam and the Second was Pelagius (c. 400 A. D.) who said that the subject of the entire passage was the Incarnate Christ and that the writer intended to depict the contrast between the course taken by the first Adam and that chosen by Christ.[1] Is it not strange that some of the Church Fathers did not pick up the alleged comparison?

So for these reasons, it seems doubtful to say the least that the writer intended to draw a contrast between the first Adam and the Second.

We now turn our attention to a comparison of the Philippians passage and parts of Deutero-Isaiah.[2] Even a casual

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1. I am taking this information from Loof's article, "Kenosis," in Hastings's Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, He suggests, however, that Pelagius may have derived the idea from earlier tradition. Loof's own interpretation is identical with that of Pelagius at this point.

2. Isaiah lii. 13-liii. 12; and xlv. 23.

glance at the passages makes it fairly evident that the writer of the hymn was identifying Christ with the Servant of Deutero-Isaiah, as shown by the similarity of terms. This fact is generally recognized.[1] But in addition to the use of the same terms or their cognates, something more, I think, remains to be said. For just as striking is the use of synonyms or near synonyms. The entire picture presents itself somewhat as follows:

The Same Terms or Cognates:

(1) Phil. ii. 8. ἐταπείνωσεν ἑαυτόν. . . .
Isa. liii. 8. ἐν τῇ ταπεινώσει. . . .

(2) Phil. ii. 8. ὑπήκοος μέχρι θανάτου. . . .
Isa. liii. 8. ἦχθε εἰς θάνατον.
Isa. liii. 12. παρεδόθη εἰς θάνατον. . . .

(3) Phil. ii. 9. διὸ καὶ ὁ θεὸς αὐτὸν ὑπερύψωσε. . . .
Isa. lii. 13. ὑψωθήσεται καὶ δοξασθήσεται σφόδρα.

(4) Phil. ii. 10-11. πᾶν γόνυ κάμψῃ. . . . καὶ πᾶσα γλῶσσα ἐξομολογήσηται. . . .
Isa. xlv. 23. ἐμοὶ κάμψει πᾶν γόνυ, καὶ ὀμεῖται πᾶσα γλῶσσα. .

(5) Phil. ii. 7-8. ἐν ὁμοιώματι ἀνθρώπων. . . . ὡς ἄνθρωπος. .
Isa. lii. 14. οὕτως ἀδοξήσει ἀπὸ τῶν ἀνθρώπων τὸ εἶδος σου, καὶ ἡ δόξα σου ἀπὸ υἱῶν ἀνθρώπων.
Isa. liii. 3. ἄνθρωπος ἐν πληγῇ ὤν. . . .

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1. See Hunter, op. cit., p. 50; Davies, op. cit., p. 274; and other sources.

Synonyms or Near Synonyms:

(1) Phil. ii. 7. δοῦλος.
Isa. lii. 13. ὁ παῖς μου. . . .[1]

(2) Phil. ii. 7. ἑαυτὸν ἐκένωσε. . . .
Isa. liii. 12. παρεδόθη εἰς θάνατον ἡ ψυχὴ αὐτοῦ. . . .[2]

(3) Phil. ii. 6-7. μορφή. . . . σχῆμα.
Isa. lii. 14. τὸ εἶδος σου, καὶ ἡ δόξα σου. . . .
Isa. liii. 2. οὐκ εἶχεν εἶδος οὐδὲ κάλλος.
Isa. liii. 3. τὸ εἶδος αὐτοῦ. . . .

Surely this extraordinary relationship between these passages calls for some explanation. How do we account for not a few of the same terms or cognates in some cases, and synonyms or near synonyms in others? While there are not a great number of synonyms, the first two mentioned above are very important. If we are to accept the theory that the Philippians passage existed originally as a pre-Pauline hymn, written possibly in Aramaic, then I suggest as a possible solution the following:

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1. Cf. Isa. liii. 11; also xli. 8; xliii. 10; and xlix. 6. The early Church seems to have been reluctant to use δοῦλος of Christ and preferred the more endearing term παῖς, which, too, was more in keeping with the Servant passages. See Acts iii. 13, 26; iv. 27, 30.

2. C. H. Dodd says: "If Pauline usage is to be decisive, it would be difficult to find a better rendering than that of the Authorized Version. If, however (as Lohmeyer and others hold), Phil. ii. 5-11 represents a pre-Pauline hymn, or if, alternatively, Paul is using an already established form of expression, it is worth while recalling that ἐκκενοῦν is used in three places in the LXX to render the piel of ערה, and that the hiphil of the same verb is used in Isa. liii. 12, which might therefore have been appropriately translated ἐξεκένωσεν τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ εἰς θάνατον." Journal of Theological Studies, (July, 1938), Vol. XXXIX, p. 292.

(1) That the original composer definitely had in mind the identifying of Christ and the Servant of Deutero-Isaiah, and purposely made use of the terms and concepts.

(2) That the translator who gave the hymn the form which has come down to us did not make use of the LXX. Being a good Greek scholar, he simply put the Aramaic poem into Greek as he thought best, with the result that some of the terms are the same (or cognates) as in the LXX Servant passages, while certain others are synonyms or concepts expressed with slightly different phraseology, as in the second example under "synonyms" given above.

(3) That St. Paul was not the translator since he was a good student of the LXX, as shown by his quotations.[1] He was merely quoting a hymn which he knew to be a favorite in the Philippian Church and which served his purpose.

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1. See Deissmann, Paul, pp. 99 ff.

CHAPTER VI.

A SURVEY OF LATE AND MODERN KENOTIC THOUGHT.

The literature on Kenoticism is exceedingly voluminous. Professor Bruce begins his Cunningham Lectures on the subject by pointing out the difficulty of his task. He says:

> "It is arduous, because it demands at least a tolerable acquaintance, at first hand as far as possible, with an extensive literature of ancient, modern, and recent origin, the recent alone being sufficiently ample to occupy the leisure of a pastor for years."[1]

We shall not attempt in this chapter to give the history of Kenotic thought. This has been amply covered in books on Christology and history of doctrine.[2] Rather, we shall select representative men of diverse views and attempt to give a resume of their understanding of what the Kenosis entailed. This, of course, is based mainly upon the Philippians passage which we have already examined. But it includes also the teaching of Scripture as a whole relative to the Person of Christ. We should keep in mind that our chief interest is in the thought of the Apostle. Later Kenoticism is of value to our purpose for any light which may be reflected upon the Apostle's concept of Christ. It should be emphasized that while some of the theories seem highly speculative and even controversial, they were motivated by a sincere desire to understand

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1. Bruce, The Humiliation of Christ, p. 1.

2. For a history of Kenoticism from the time of the Fathers until 1881 (the date of publication), the finest work, to my knowledge, is still Bruce, op. cit. Special mention should also be made of Bensow, Die Lehre von der Kenose; Relton, A Study in Christology; and Loof's article, "Kenosis," in Hastings's Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics.

the nature of the Incarnate Lord, and most of the writers were men deeply devout.

The Kenotic theories, as such, belong to comparatively recent times. But Kenoticism in principle goes back to the Gospel tradition. It is not dependent upon any one passage or several passages but rather is involved in the total faith of the Primitive Community, expressed in many ways, that the Pre-existent Son of God tabernacled among us. The nearest parallel to the Philippians passage is II Corinthians viii. 9:

> "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might become rich."

But the idea is involved in the very thought of the Incarnation, "The Word became flesh."[1]

Any attempt at classification of the multitudinous views of the Kenosis is difficult for the very reason that they are multitudinous and diverse. However, the following outline will serve a useful purpose. The variations occur within this broad framework:

(1) <u>That the subject of the Kenosis was the Pre-existent Logos</u>.

a. That the depotentiation was absolute, excepting bare Essence only. The Logos surrendered <u>all</u> of His divine attributes and His divine self-consciousness, undergoing a

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1. John i. 14. Cf. Hebrews ii. 9-10.

complete "metamorphosis," reducing Himself to a human soul, or human ego. (So Gess, Godet, and others).

b. That the depotentiation was partial and relative; that the Logos in becoming Incarnate retained His essential, ethical attributes (truth, holiness, love, etc.), but surrendered His non-essential, external attributes (omniscience, omnipotence and omnipresence) which He could do, so it is contended, without the surrender of Essence. A difference of opinion prevails regarding the extent of the surrender of the "non-essential" attributes, some saying that He surrendered all of them and depended entirely upon prayer and the Holy Spirit in the execution of His miracles; others saying that He retained them and used them to the extent necessary to the execution of His mission. (Thomasius, Fairbairn, and others).

c. That the Logos, in becoming Incarnate, surrendered none of His divine attributes but that He "subsumed" humanity. Human experience was "added to" His divine "form" of existence. The Logos had simultaneously either (a) two non-communicating life-centers or centers of consciousness, or (b) a single life-center with two forms of expression. (With qualifications, Calvin, Martensen, Gore, Weston, Temple, Newton Clarke, Relton, Bulgakov, Thornton, Mascall, and others).

d. That the Kenosis of the Eternal Logos was real but undefined. To attempt to go beyond Scriptural revelation and discern the "process" by which the Son of God became Incarnate is to indulge in speculation. The principle of the Kenosis is

true, the process uncertain. (Bruce, Bensow, Forrest, Forsyth, Mackintosh, and others).

(2) That the subject of the Kenosis, Philippians ii. 5-11 entire, was the Incarnate Logos, the God-man, Jesus Christ.

a. That the Incarnate Christ was in the "form of God" and possessed all of the divine attributes, though they were either "hidden," or by His own volition not put to full use; that they were "revealed" only to the extent necessary to the fulfilment of His mission. (In general, the Lutheran School, and others).

b. That it was the Incarnate Christ (possessing what attributes or powers is not said) who, in contrast to the first Adam, pursued a course of humility and self-sacrifice. (Loofs, and others).

We shall now endeavor to summarize the views of some of the leading writers on the subject. It is recognized that it is difficult to give in resume the views which a writer has expounded perhaps in a volume or two and do full justice to the author. Some of the statements may need slight qualification, therefore. However, it is hoped that in the main the picture is not distorted.

Kenoticism in Catholic Theology.

The Roman Catholic Church has never been concerned with Kenoticism to the same extent as the Protestant communion for

the simple reason that Catholic theology has never conceived of the Incarnation as a depotentiation of the divine attributes but rather as the assumption of human nature. The exinanition did not consist in a change in the divine nature but a change in the human; not in the self-emptying of the divine but the lifting of the human. Of course the Incarnation was in itself an act of humility followed by a noble historic example of humility and self-sacrifice. Nevertheless, there was no Kenosis of attributes, as Protestants in general conceived the Kenosis. The "assumption" of human nature by the divine is also held by some Protestants, however, and this will be discussed further when we take up the views of William Temple.[1]

Kenoticism in Lutheran Theology.

Luther's Christology resembles closely Catholic thought at this point. His motive was to give to faith an Incarnate Christ fully divine, but the road he chose was fraught with many inconsistencies. Luther understood the Incarnate Christ to be the subject of Philippians ii. 5-11. The Eternal Logos, in becoming Incarnate, lost none of His divine attributes but assumed human nature. Human nature was capable of receiving the Infinite (Finitum est capax infiniti). The union resulted in the mutual permeation of the two natures and the bestowal of the divine attributes to the human (communicatio idiomatum) so that the Incarnate Christ was really omnipotent, omniscient,

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1. For a good summary of the Roman Catholic view of Kenoticism, see Loofs, op. cit., section 5; and more recently Dom A. Graham, The Christ of Catholicism, pp. 182 ff.

and omnipresent. But, on the other hand, there was no conveyance of human properties to the Logos, for this, it was affirmed, would be inconsistent with the immutability of God. The divine attributes, though fully present, were for the most part "hidden" and self-restrained, with only occasional glimpses through the veil.[1] The Incarnate Logos continued to hold His relationships in the Trinity and the cosmos, though these relationships were "hidden." A sharp distinction was made between the Incarnation and humiliation. The subject of humiliation was not the Logos per se, for in becoming Incarnate the Logos lost neither His divine attributes nor His majesty, which would be contrary to His immutability. Rather, the subject of humiliation both in the Incarnation and subsequently was Christ "in respect of His human nature." The inconsistency here is apparent, that the human nature had really received the divine properties; yet that the humiliation and suffering were only in respect of His human nature.

Kenoticism in Reformed Theology.

In Calvinistic theology the findings of the Council of Chalcedon were virtually reaffirmed. The Eternal Logos in the Incarnation was truly united with humanity. However, the two

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1. The interesting controversy between John Brentz and Martin Chemnitz whether the attributes, including ubiquity of the body of Jesus, were exercised absolutely, though "hidden," (as Brentz held); or whether the attributes, including ubiquity, though fully possessed, were customarily not exercised at all, (Chemnitz), need not concern us further. This controversy was later carried on by the Tübingen and Giessen Schools, the former taking the side of Brentz and affirming the "kryptic use" of the attributes, and the Giessen School taking the side of Chemnitz, affirming the "Kenotic use" (non-use, except occasional). The arguments are involved and subtle. For an interesting and full discussion of the issues involved, see Bruce, op. cit., Chapter III, pp. 82 ff.

natures were not changed or mixed or confused, but remained distinct and retained their respective essential properties. Thus the Incarnate Christ was affirmed to be truly divine and truly human. The Lutheran doctrine of the transference of the divine attributes to the human was met with a decided negative, finitum non est capax infiniti. The Lutheran idea of the ubiquity of the body of Christ (whether historical or exalted) was rejected as inconsistent with the necessary limitations of a body, as well as contrary to the Scriptural presentation of Him. At the same time, human nature did not enclose the Logos. Rather, the Logos, while present in the manhood, was none the less existent outside of it --- totus extra carnem as well as totus in carne.[1] Simultaneously He was dwelling among us and governing the universe and maintaining His relationship in the Trinity, as it were, from two centers of consciousness. The subject of Philippians ii. 5-6 was the Eternal Son who condescended in becoming Incarnate, and then further historically walked a course of humility and self-sacrifice.

Wolfgang F. Gess.[2]

La Touche calls the theory of Gess and others of similar view "Incarnation by Divine Suicide."[3] Others speak of it as a "metamorphosis." According to Gess, the Eternal

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1. Calvin's Institutes, Book II, Chapter 13. Hence the term "extra" Calvinism.

2. Gess, Die Lehre von der Person Christi; and Christi Person und Werk. See also Bruce, op. cit., pp. 144 ff.

3. La Touche, The Person of Christ in Modern Thought, p. 355.

Logos surrendered all of His divine attributes and reduced Himself to a human soul. In Essence He remained the Logos, but He took the place of the human soul, or more correctly He became a human soul. He evades the accusation of Apollinarianism, for whereas Apollinaris contended that the Logos was a substitute for the human soul, or mind, in the Incarnate Christ, he (Gess) contended that the Logos became a human soul. He completely lost His divine self-consciousness, which He gradually recovered as He developed normally as a boy and man. Yet, while Gess speaks of the extinction of the divine self-consciousness in the Incarnation, he says that in the recovery of it there must have been latent within the Incarnate Logos a certain "instinct" as to His identity.

The Logos did not lead a double life. During the period of the Incarnation the Father exercised the cosmic administration, which He was able to do because of the Trinitarian relationship.

Frédéric Godet.[1]

The view of Godet is quite similar to that of Gess. The Eternal Logos exchanged His "form of God" for the "form of a servant," but by this he means not an exchange of states, or outward conditions, but the surrender of the divine attributes. Concerning John i. 14, "The Word became flesh," he says that ἐγένετο goes to the very root of the mode of existence.

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1. Godet, Etudes Bibliques, pp. 134 ff., 358 ff., and 394 ff; the English translation, Commentary on the Gospel of St. John, pp. 160 ff., 361 ff., and 396 ff.

His divine self-consciousness, which was His light, He allowed to be extinguished within Him. It awoke again at His baptism. In becoming Incarnate, He retained only His inalienable personality, His "Ego," endowed with liberty and intelligence as every human "ego." In view of His abasement He was able to enter into a human development completely similar to ours. He did not possess omnipotence but through prayer obtained special power in the service of love. He was not omniscient but possessed preeminent prophetic vision, as in the incident regarding the Samaritan woman.[1] And, of course, He was not omnipresent. His love, perfect as it was, was not divine love. His holiness, though perfect, was also human, at the cost of struggle. He was "perfect relatively" as he developed. During the Incarnate state the Father exercised the cosmic functions for the Son.

Gottfried Thomasius.[2]

Thomasius divided the attributes into those that were "essential" (absolute truth, absolute holiness, and absolute love), and those that were "relative" (omnipotence, omniscience, and omnipresence). The latter category the Logos could and did surrender in the Incarnation without any divine mutability, for these attributes represented not Essence but God's relationship to the world. Hence they were external to His Being and could be expressed or surrendered at will. Indeed, the essential attributes were never so revealed as in the free surrender of the relative ones in the Incarnation. The humilia-

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1. John iv. 16-19.

2. Thomasius, Christi Person und Werk, Vol. II. See also Bruce, op. cit., pp. 138 ff.; and Mackintosh, op. cit., pp. 266 f.

tion, then, was not simply a Kenosis but a revelation. As for miracles, these were wrought not by any possession of omnipotence but by the power of the Holy Spirit which Christ possessed in a unique way because of His receptivity.

The Incarnate Person he divided into "Ich" and "Natur," and Natur he subdivided into "Seele" and "Leib." The Eternal Logos became the "Ich" or "Ego" of the Incarnate Christ. But His consciousness was specifically human. The difference between Him and us is that His Ego was not originally born out of human nature but was born into it, and thus there was consummated and expressed a truly divine-human Person.

Thomasius repudiates the idea that there was a Logos "extra carnem."

A. M. Fairbairn.[1]

Principal Fairbairn also distinguishes between the "ethical" and "physical" attributes. The former could not be surrendered for they were essential to Essence, but the latter, by direction of the ethical ones, could be, and were, limited, or restrained, or veiled. The Kenosis was a moral necessity for God for the salvation of sinners.

God had already expressed a certain kind of Kenosis in creation by limiting Himself in creating that which is temporal and finite and setting up laws by which the universe operates. The Incarnation was another example of Kenosis and, of course,

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1. Fairbairn, The Place of Christ in Modern Theology, especially pp. 476 ff.

His most significant.

The Incarnate Person, to be real, must of necessity have been a unity, for two wills or minds were two persons. But the natures, divine and human, were distinct, howbeit perfectly united. Because of the affinity of the two natures there was a real and reciprocal communicatio idiomatum.

> "Hence, by its union with the Deity the humanity is not superceded or diminished, but rather exercised, realized, and enlarged; and by its union with the humanity the Deity is not discharged or lessened, but rather actualized, personalized, made articulate. . . . The perfection of the humanity, while realized in time, expressed what was of eternity --- the perfection of the Godhood, not the physical attributes which belonged to the Creator, but the inner qualities, the hidden loves and energies which were, as we have said, the God of God."[1]

Hans Lassen Martensen.[2]

In Martensen we have a Kenosis "real but relative," a Logos with two non-communicating life-centers. The Logos leads a double life. The theory is best conceived if we imagine a small circle within a much larger one, the small circle representing the Incarnate state and the larger circle representing the total Logos relationships and activities.[3] Martensen distinguishes between a "Logos revelation" and a "Christ revelation." As the "Logos revelation" He is the Creator, the source and ground of all existence, and as such He continued to carry on all such activities "extra carnem." As the "Christ

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1. Fairbairn, op. cit., p. 479.

2. Martensen, Die Christliche Dogmatik, (Deutsche Ausgabe, 1856), pp. 221 ff; English translation, Christian Dogmatics, pp. 240 ff., 259 ff., and 264 ff. Also, see Bruce, op. cit., pp. 159 ff.; and La Touche, op. cit., pp. 357 f.

3. The analogy is my own, not Martensen's.

revelation" He is Mediator and Redeemer. In the second role He experienced a real limitation and humiliation; yet He was just as truly God in this role as the first. As for self-consciousness, the Incarnate Christ was limited by His creature-hood so that He knew nothing of the "Logos revelation," but as He developed, His divine self-consciousness gradually awoke so that He knew Himself to be the Son of God and "recollected" that He was Pre-existent. Thus the self-consciousness of the Incarnate Christ grew towards identification with the self-consciousness of the Logos "extra carnem."

As to just how the "Christ revelation" is related to the humanity of Christ, Martensen is silent.

Charles Gore.[1]

Bishop Gore expounds a doctrine of the Kenosis quite similar to that of Martensen, but with this difference: Whereas Martensen says that the "Christ revelation" abandoned His omnipotence, omniscience, and omnipresence, Bishop Gore says that only the use of them was abandoned. Within the limits of humanity He lived as any other man, excepting sin only. Thus the truly human experience of Christ is emphasized. The claim of omniscience for the Incarnate Lord is not true to the Gospel record. Thus we are to think of Him as actually ignorant in some matters, accepting and holding the views of His contemporaries, but infallible as regards His mission and work of

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1. Gore, Bampton Lectures, 1891; Dissertations on Subjects Connected With the Incarnation, 1898; Belief in Christ, 1922; and Can We Believe? 1926.

redemption. His power to perform miracles came through prayer and the endowment of the Holy Spirit.

With Martensen, Bishop Gore says that the Logos must have continued outside of the sphere of the Incarnate Life to exercise His cosmic functions and His relationship in the Trinity, but he insists that we must not bring the absolute "extra carnem" relationships side by side with the picture of His humiliation.

Thus he, too, gives us a Logos with two centers of consciousness, one limited and the other unlimited. Realizing the problem involved in thus thinking of two centers of consciousness within one Person, he acknowledges this as a mystery of the inner life of the Logos, beyond our information, and thinks it best not to attempt an answer.[1]

Frank Weston.[2]

The chief point which Bishop Weston makes repeatedly is that the Incarnate Christ had a single self-consciousness. But from this single center of self-consciousness the Eternal Logos assumed a dual role, two modes of expression. Being immutable, He could not abandon His relationship within the Trinity or His cosmic activities. At the same time He imposed upon Himself within the sphere of the Incarnation all the limitations of humanity. Several examples are cited of individuals with dual roles, one a son who is sent to a regiment of which his father is the General; and another, a Priest who is

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1. Gore, Belief in Christ, p. 226.
2. Weston, The One Christ.

both the son of his parents and their Confessor.[1]

The Incarnate Logos self-wills continuously (as opposed to the idea of a single pre-Incarnate decision) to live under all the restraints of humanity. He has no relationship with the Father except as mediated through human nature, howbeit, perfect human nature. He knows nothing of His relationship to the Trinity or to the cosmos except as this knowledge is mediated through the ever increasing apprehension of His manhood. Although a single self-consciousness is affirmed, Bishop Weston says that there must have been a difference in the content in the two roles, the content of the one being unlimited and the other limited, but the latter ever increasing towards the former as Jesus developed. This unlimited knowledge was, as it were, in the sub-conscious, but there only because He willed it so.[2] Thus Bishop Weston avoids, at least to his own satisfaction, the theory of two centers of consciousness by conceiving a Logos with a single center with two modes of expression of different content. At the same time, we are not to think of the cosmic and Trinitarian relationships of the Logos as separated from the Incarnate relationships as though they were two spheres divided by an impassible gulf, for all alike pertained to the same Person.

Yet, though he affirms strongly a single self-consciousness, he postulates two wills. The issues are involved, so we shall simply quote him:

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1. Ibid., pp. 151 and 155.

2. Ibid., pp. 155 f. Interestingly enough, Sanday quotes Weston on this in support of his own theory that Christ's divine nature had its center in the sub-conscious. (Sanday, Christology and Personality, pp. 169 f.).

> "The will is a function of a person, inseparable from him. It is not a part of him: it is a mode of his self-manifestation. . . . He cannot express Himself as God in manhood except personally and humanly: that is, through His divine and human wills. He is the Ego of the manhood: and a human will is an essential function of such an Ego. But he is the Ego of manhood because He is divine, and a divine will is an essential function of a divine Person. So that the two wills of Christ must always be confessed, for they are two essential functions of God in manhood."[1]

Finally, the manhood of Christ is His proper, assumed nature to all eternity. The state of the Incarnation is permanent.

William Temple.[2]

Archbishop Temple's concept of the Incarnation resembles at various points some which we have been discussing. The Eternal Logos lost nothing in the Incarnation but "subsumed" human nature. He conceives of the Incarnation not as a conversion of the Godhead into flesh, but as the taking up of manhood into God. He illustrates this by the evolutionary process in nature in which each grade, or level, of Reality finds its fulfilment only when it is possessed by a higher and becomes the expression of the higher. The Incarnation is the next level of Reality which we should logically expect.[3]

The Person, or Ego, of the Incarnate Christ is the Eternal Son. At the same time, it is not incorrect to speak of the human personality of Christ, but that personality does

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1. Weston, op. cit., pp. 174 ff.

2. Temple, Christus Veritas, Chapter VIII, pp. 124 ff.

3. The views of Thornton, The Incarnate Lord, and Mascall, Christ, the Christian and the Church, are essentially the same as Archbishop Temple's, and they also illustrate from the evolutionary process of nature.

not exist side by side with the divine personality; it is "subsumed" by it and the human personality is the self-expression of the Eternal Person.[1]

The Logos had not two existences but two modes of expression, and while Incarnate was also "in the bosom of the Father."[2] Hence He continued to exercise His cosmic functions. The Logos Incarnate was subject to all human conditions. Certain attributes or functions incompatible with humanity were not exercised. Archbishop Temple admits that this theory involves a mystery about the consciousness of the Logos, for it appears to make two centers of consciousness, but:

> ". . . . that is exactly where the difficulty ought most clearly to arise, for about the mode of His consciousness we can have simply no knowledge whatever."[3]

Herbert M. Relton.[4]

Professor Relton finds the clue to the Incarnation in the doctrine of "enhypostasia"[5] proposed by Leontius of

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1. In Brunner's involved presentation of the Incarnation in The Mediator, he distinguishes sharply between Person and personality, the inner Word and the historical manifestation (pp. 345, 360, and generally). The Person was none other than the divine Word, not from our side, but He was "veiled" behind the human personality so that the Person could only be discerned by faith. One cannot but feel that his differentiation is forced and that St. Paul would object strongly to any idea that the Person was not historical --- unless anyone's "person" is also unhistorical, the personality being all that is seen.

2. John i. 18.

3. Temple, op. cit., p. 141. Cf. p. 142, footnote.

4. Relton, A Study in Christology.

5. Literally, "in-personal," the doctrine that the human nature of Christ was personal in the Logos, as opposed to the doctrine of "anhypostasia," the idea that since the subject of the God-man was the Logos, the humanity which He assumed was "impersonal," or in other words, that Christ was "Man" but not "a man."

Byzantium and John of Damascus. He rejects the idea of "impersonal humanity" as a meaningless phrase. The personality of the Incarnate Christ was "in-personal" in the Logos. The Logos, prior to His Incarnation, possessed all that was truly distinctive in human personality. The divine and human natures are not to be thought of as contradictory but complementary, the greater containing the lesser. Human personality is incomplete without God and only in God is brought to full realization. Therefore the human personality of Jesus was not less complete than ours, but more complete for the very reason that He was divine.

What then of His self-consciousness? There was naturally a single self-consciousness since there was a single subject. But the self-consciousness is to be thought of as simultaneously "unlimited" and "self-limited." Here the thought resembles very closely that of Bishop Weston. Relton speaks of the "form" of the consciousness of the Incarnate Christ. In its unlimited form He knows His relationship to the Eternal Trinity and the cosmos; in its limited form, His knowledge, while divine in content, is self-restricted to the range of humanity. Relton speaks of "two sets of knowledge." If this seems contradictory that Christ could have a knowledge "limited" and "unlimited" at the same time, appeal can only be made to the Gospel records which confirm the fact. This seems very close to the Athanasian view that the Incarnate Christ had two centers of consciousness, one limited and the other unlimited. Relton, however, would

reject this and would hold that there was only one center mediating two sets of knowledge.[1]

Friedrich Loofs.[2]

Loof's idea of the Incarnation can be summarized by saying that the human self-consciousness of Jesus was uniquely filled by the Holy Spirit.[3] Trained in the Ritschlian School, he begins his Christology not with the Pre-existent Son of God but with the human, historical Jesus. He rejects the Christology of the early Church Councils that two natures were united in one Person, or that a Pre-existent Logos became the personal subject of the Incarnate Christ, which idea is mythological.[4] The above being true, he naturally rejects all forms of Kenotic constructions.

Nevertheless, he would hold to the deity of Christ because, as we have said, He was uniquely filled by the Holy Spirit in a way never before known and never thereafter to be equalled.

We have already referred to his interpretation of Philippians ii. 5-11.[5]

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1. For these ideas see Relton, op. cit., especially pp. 223-235.

2. Loofs, What Is the Truth About Jesus Christ?; his book on Nestorius; and his article on "Kenosis" in Hastings's Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics.

3. This is his conclusion in What Is the Truth About Jesus Christ? See especially pp. 237 ff.

4. Nestorius, pp. 129 f.; and What Is the Truth About Jesus Christ, Chapter V, pp. 162 ff.

5. Supra, p. 129, footnote 1.

A. B. Bruce,[1] Oscar Bensow,[2] D. W. Forrest,[3] P. T. Forsyth,[4] and H. R. Mackintosh.[5]

The above named theologians may be discussed together because, so far as the Kenosis is concerned, their views are almost identical.

The Pre-existent Son of God in becoming Incarnate experienced a real Kenosis, a real depotentiation or limitation of His former powers, although there was no change in Essence. None of the writers attempts to give an estimate as to the mode or the extent of the Kenosis, for such is beyond Scriptural revelation and enters the field of speculation. Since Professor Mackintosh summarizes his view in four propositions, we may allow him to speak for all:

> (1) Christ is now Divine, as being the object of faith and worship, with whom believing men have immediate, though not unmediated, fellowship.
>
> (2) In some personal sense His Divinity is eternal, not the fruit of time, since by definition Godhead cannot have come to be ex nihilo; His pre-mundane being therefore is real, not ideal merely.

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1. Bruce, op. cit., especially pp. 1-37 and 190 f.

2. Bensow, op. cit., especially p. 235 where a summary of his view is given.

3. Forrest, The Authority of Christ, pp. 82-100.

4. Forsyth, The Person and Place of Jesus Christ, pp. 261-357.

5. Mackintosh, op. cit., pp. 383-490, especially chapter X, "The Self-Limitation of God in Christ," pp. 463 ff.

(3) His life on earth was unequivocally human. Jesus was a man, a Jew of the first century, with a life localized in and restricted by a body organic to His self-consciousness; of limited power, which could be, and was, thwarted by persistent unbelief; of limited knowledge, which, being gradually built up by experience, made Him liable to surprise and disappointment; of a moral nature susceptible of growth, and exposed to life-long temptation; of a piety and personal religion characterized at each point by dependence on God. In short, He moved always within the lines of an experience normal in constitution, even if abnormal in its sinless quality. The life Divine in Him found expression through human faculty, with a self-consciousness and activity mediated by His human milieu.

(4) We cannot predicate of Him two consciousnesses or two wills; the New Testament indicates nothing of the kind, nor indeed is it congruous with an intelligible psychology. The unity of His personal life is axiomatic."[1]

He concludes:

"Now it is impossible to think these four positions together save as we proceed to infer that a real surrender of the glory and prerogatives of deity, 'a moral act in the heavenly sphere,' must have preceded the advent of God in Christ. We are faced by a Divine self-reduction which entailed obedience, temptation, and death. So that religion has a vast stake in the Kenosis as a fact, whatever the difficulties as to its method may be. No human life of God is possible without a prior self-adjustment of deity. The Son must empty Himself in order that from within mankind He may declare the Father's name, offer the great sacrifice, triumph over death; and the reality with which, to reach this end, He laid aside the form and privilege of deity is the measure of that love which had throbbed in the Divine heart from all eternity."[2]

Donald M. Baillie.[3]

Professor Baillie examines the possibilities in "anhypostasia" and "enhypostasia" which he finds in both cases unsatisfactory. Likewise he turns aside the Kenotic theories as

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1. Mackintosh, op. cit., pp. 469 f. Cf. the propositions given by Bruce, op. cit., pp. 22 f., and continued on p. 35.

2. Mackintosh, op. cit., p. 470.

3. Baillie, God Was In Christ.

untenable. He recognizes, however, that the Kenosis of which St. Paul wrote is in some sense a reality, but not in the usual signification of the term as a divine self-emptying in the Incarnation.

The clue to the Incarnation he finds in that which is the experience and testimony of Christians throughout the centuries, that any goodness is not to be attributed to self but to God after the manner of the Apostle, "I, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me."[1] This is "the paradox of grace." God is prevenient in human goodness. Human goodness is not to be thought of as "shared honors," nor even as a "partnership." It is all the work of self, but all the work of God too. The area of God's action and the area of our action are not to be thought of as delimited. But the divine side is somehow prior to the human. Whatever good there is in our lives is all of God and was His before it was ours. Human personality finds its fulfilment through the working out of this paradox. Never is human action more free and more personal than when a man can say, "I, yet not I, but God."

This paradox of grace, taken at the absolute degree, gives the whole ground of the life of Christ, of which we can say that it was the life of a man and yet also, in a deeper and prior sense, the very life of God. The life of Jesus, being the perfection of humanity, is also, and even in a deeper and prior sense, the very life of God Himself. Jesus is "wholly human" and

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1. I Cor. xv. 10.

"wholly divine." But always (and this is stressed) the grace of God is prevenient, so that however far back one may go in the life of Jesus, he can never reach a point that would meet the requirements of "Adoptionism."[1] He lived His life in such a way that it was the life of God Incarnate; but also, since the initiative is always with God, He lived it as He did because it was the life of God Incarnate. Citing Galatians iv. 4, II Corinthians viii. 9, Philippians ii. 6-7, John iii. 16, and I John iv. 9 as being true because the initiative is always with the divine, he comments further:

> "These verses deal with the relation between the temporal and the eternal, the relation of the historical Incarnation on earth to its eternal and heavenly antecedents, and therefore they are obviously figurative and symbolic in their expressions. But we are bound to use such expressions in order to do justice to the divine priority and initiative and condescension, and even sacrifice, in the Incarnation. We are bound to use them in such a way as to confess that while the life lived by Jesus was wholly human, that which was Incarnate in Him was of the Essence of God, the very Son of the Father, very God of very God."[2]

At the same time, there was no continuity of life and memory between Jesus of Nazareth and the Pre-existent Son.

Earlier, Professor Baillie criticized the Kenotic theories as untenable and as never having given a good reply to Archbishop Temple's question:

> "What was happening to the rest of the universe during the period of our Lord's earthly life? To say that the Infant Jesus was from His cradle exercising providential care over it all is certainly monstrous; but to deny this,

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1. The doctrine that God adopted the human Jesus to be the Christ and His Son.

2. Baillie, op. cit., pp. 150 f.

> and yet to say that the Creative Word was so self-emptied as to have no being except in the Infant Jesus, is to assert that for a certain period the history of the world was let loose from the control of the Creative Word."[1]

But thereafter, so far as I can find, Professor Baillie does not deal with the cosmic relationship of the Word and how this may fit into his theory. One could wish that (in such an excellent book) he had been more specific regarding his own view at this point.

Conclusions.

How are all these Christological views to be interpreted? Is there any guiding star? Is there any reflection of light upon the original meaning of St. Paul?

We shall not attempt to put forward a theory of our own. But in our discussion, one fact stands out as paramount. In all of the various theories which we have discussed, and we might add also in the early Church Councils and the doctrines associated with the names of Apollinaris, Nestorius, Cyril of Alexandria, Eutyches, and others, it was not the deity of Christ that was called into question. Rather, the problem was how to relate His deity, which was accepted, to His true humanity. Of course in every age there have been those who have denied His deity. Some have claimed that He was a man whom His admirers deified. Others have found an answer in a comparison with current myths. Others have found a human Jesus who nevertheless revealed God and therefore might be said to be the moral

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1. Ibid., pp. 95 f. The quotation from Temple is from Christus Veritas, pp. 142 f.

equivalent of God. But such concepts do not properly belong to the field of Kenoticism. Kenoticism begins with the recognition of the deity of Christ.

The Apostles apparently were not bothered to explain the paradox. Their viewpoint seems to have been one of juxtaposition. They were too close to the historic life to doubt His true humanity, and yet had seen in Him something not humanly explicable, hence divine. Especially was their view vindicated for them by the resurrection. Repeatedly we find them appealing to the phrase, "Whom God raised up."[1]

Those writers who say that our Christology should begin with the Incarnate Life rather than with the Trinity are, of course, historically correct, for the doctrine of the Trinity was the outgrowth of the attempt to explain theologically what had already been ascertained experientially. It was specifically the historical method which the early disciples used and which brought them to their conclusion that Christ could only be explained in terms of the Godhead.

During the centuries which have followed, any claims that have been put forward for less than this have been met with a strong and uncompromising rebuttal. A Christ who is likened to "John the Baptist, or Elijah, or Jeremiah, or one of the other prophets"[2] is not enough. In the words of Professor Donald Baillie:

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1. Acts ii. 24, 32; iii. 15, 26; iv. 10; v. 30; x. 40; etc.

2. Matt. xvi. 14; Cf. Mark viii. 28.

> "A toned down Christology is absurd. It must be all or nothing --- all or nothing on both the divine and human side. That is the very extreme of paradox."[1]

And certainly that is Pauline Christology. To him, Christ was nothing less than "the fulness of the Godhead," the Eternal Son of God, "who for us men and for our salvation came down."[2]

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1. Baillie, op. cit., p. 132.

2. From the Nicene Creed.

PART THREE

T H E P A R A D O X,

P L E R O M A A N D K E N O S I S

"It follows from the true conception of Christ's Person, that He and He alone can bridge over the chasm between earth and heaven; for He is at once the lowest and the highest. He raises up man to God, for He brings down God to man."[1]

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1. Lightfoot, The Epistles of St. Paul, Colossians and Philemon, p. 103.

CHAPTER VII.

THE PARADOX WITH REFERENCE TO THE INCARNATION.

There are two ways to receive a new appreciation of the exceeding height of a skyscraper. The first is to take the elevator to the top story and look down. The other is to stand at the bottom and look up. This is what we do, so to speak, in the two words of our study. In Pleroma, we are standing at the height, seeing in Christ "all the fulness of the Godhead." In Kenosis, we are standing at the foot of the cross and looking up, amazed that a love so high could and would stoop to such a depth. Hoskyns and Davey write:

> "The final paradox can now be stated. The action of the living God, which took place in a single human life, carried with it no spectacular display of supernatural power. For in the end, and here the New Testament authors speak with united voice, the action of God took place in complete humiliation and in what appeared to be remarkable weakness. The salvation of God occurred not in one who possessed plenary power or lived in the light of an open vision of His glory; it occurred in human faith and temptation and in a single, isolated figure. Yet the knowledge of God and His righteousness became available for men through the display of His power in the weakness of a single concrete life and death."[1]

And Reinhold Niebuhr says:

> "The idea of eternity entering time is intellectually absurd. This absurdity is proved to the hilt by all the theological dogmas which seek to make it rational. The dogmas which seek to describe the relation of God the Father (the God who does not enter history) and God the Son (the God of history) all insist that the Son is equal

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1. Hoskyns and Davey, The Riddle of the New Testament, p. 176.

> to the Father and is yet not equal to Him. In the same way all the doctrines of the two natures of Christ assert that He is not less divine for being human and temporal and not less human and temporal for being fully divine. . . . It is this idea which theology sought to rationalize in the doctrines of the two natures of Christ. It cannot be rationalized and yet it is a true idea."[1]

Professor Baillie offers a very helpful illustration of a person who wants to represent the globe on a flat surface. This cannot be done without a certain amount of falsification, for it is impossible to accurately represent a sphere on a plane surface. So he produces two kinds of maps which can be compared with each other:

> "The one is contained in two circles representing two hemispheres. The other is contained in an oblong (Mercator's projection). Each is a map of the whole world, and they contradict each other to some extent at every point. Yet they are both needed, and taken together they correct each other. They would be either misleading or mystifying to anyone who did not know that they represent the surface of a sphere. . . ."[2]

So, at best, we are not able to resolve the paradox. Perhaps what we lack is another dimension. Principal Forsyth, in his straightforward way, says:

> "If we ask <u>how</u> Eternal Godhead could make the actual condition of human nature His own, we must answer, as I have already said, that we do not know. We cannot follow the steps of the process, or make a psychological sketch. There is something presumptuous in certain kenotic efforts to body forth just what the Son must have gone through in such an experience. God has done things for His own which it has not entered into the heart of man to conceive. It is the miracle behind all miracle."[3]

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1. Niebuhr, <u>Beyond Tragedy</u>, pp. 13 and 16.

2. Baillie, <u>op. cit.</u>, p. 109.

3. Forsyth, <u>op. cit.</u>, p. 320. Cf. Mackintosh, <u>op. cit.</u>, pp. 468, 471, and 483.

But while the paradox of God's entering manhood is not to be resolved or explained, the significance of it can be appreciated and appropriated. The concepts "Pleroma" and "Kenosis" serve to assist us to a better understanding of what the paradox involves. This is best conceived not by thinking of Pleroma as one aspect of Christ and the Kenosis as another, but by understanding them as mutually involving each other, or correlative. Pleroma refers to the Person and the Kenosis to His deed, His action in history. The Person, being who He was and what He was, expressed Himself in the Kenosis. The Kenosis was a moral necessity to His nature. Being Infinite Love, His course could not have been otherwise. To quote Principal Forsyth again:

> "His action arose ethically out of what He was, His carriage expressed His soul, His vocation rested on His position."[1]

But how does the Kenosis fit in with the doctrine of the immutability of God? Are not the two ideas mutually exclusive? The doctrine of the immutability of God was taken over largely from Greek sources, and while we may owe much to Greek thought in some respects, especially as supplementing the Hebrew-Christian belief in the immortality of the soul, I cannot but feel that theology has suffered from the Greek concept of the impassibility of God. For the Greeks conceived impassibility as an unalterable force, or power, or principle, and the personality of God was for the most part far in the

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1. Forsyth, op. cit., p. 352. Cf. Mackintosh, op. cit., p. 472.

background. To take just one example of how this doctrine has affected Christian thought, we may refer to the view of one to whom Christianity is greatly indebted in many respects, St. Thomas Aquinas. St. Thomas finds it impossible to accept any mutuality of relationship between the Creator and the creature. Any apparent change, or self-movement of God towards man, is really only man's viewpoint of the event, like seeing an immovable column first from the left, then from the right. But strictly speaking there was no self-movement of God towards man. Any apparent movement, or change, or adaptation of relationship was only in the creature.[1] Therefore, according to St. Thomas, in the Incarnation there was no self-limitation on the part of the Son of God; and further, on the cross, He suffered only as respected His manhood. Yet, of course, St. Thomas accepts this as of ultimate value and much emphasis is laid upon the atoning sacrifice, the cross and the Sacrament.

The doctrine of the immutability of God must begin either with the concept of God as a Person, or with the historic manifestation of Jesus Christ as a Person. When an idea of God formerly held conflicts with the revelation in Jesus Christ, it will be found advisable to conform the idea to the Christian revelation, not to try to fit the Christian revelation into patterns of thought arrived at from extraneous sources. The idea of a God "in whom there is no variableness, neither shadow that is cast by turning"[2] must be interpreted

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1. On this, with quotations from St. Thomas, see Quick, op. cit., pp. 125 f.

2. James i. 17.

in the same light as "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today and forever."[1] It would be quite foreign to the intent of the writer to the Hebrews if we should interpret this as "unchangeableness," lack of self-expression and self-giving, absence of compassion, emotion, and all those other qualities which are distinct to a person. On the contrary, this writer, perhaps more than any other in the New Testament, portrays the true humanity of our Lord. He who was God's "Son"[2] and the "effulgence of His glory"[3] was also the one who "in the days of His flesh offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears."[4] In what sense could it be said that He is the same yesterday, today and forever? Only in that He is the "same" in His consistent love, His persistent purpose, His dependable grace, and His unvarying holiness. We must never lose sight of the fact that God is a Person and as such He has the right and the power to express Himself as He deems best in achieving His purpose. Principal Forsyth says:

> "The nature of Godhead is Holy Love. There lies the region, the nature, and the norm of its omnipotence. . . . It is an almighty love in the sense that it is capable of limiting itself, and, while an end, becoming also a means, to an extent adequate to all love's infinite ends. This self-renouncing, self-retracting act of the Son's will, this reduction of Himself from the supreme end to be the supreme means for the soul, is no negation of His nature; it is the opposite, it is the last assertion of His nature as love. . . . If the Creator could not have become immanent in creation His infinity would have been curtailed by all the powers and dimensions of space. And if immanence could not pass by a new act into Incarnation then God would have been lost in His world, and the world lost to God."[5]

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1. Hebrews xiii. 8.
2. Hebrews i. 5-8; v. 5, 8; etc.
3. Hebrews i. 3.
4. Hebrews v. 7.
5. Forsyth, op. cit., pp. 313 f.

H. R. Mackintosh has put it well in saying that Christ reveals in God "the infinite mobility of absolute grace."[1]

We conclude, then, that the Kenosis far from being impossible to the immutability of God was necessitated by it, was a declaration of it. The Kenosis was the self-expression of the fulness of God.

But if the Pleroma necessitated the Kenosis, the Kenosis was also a Plerosis.[2] It was a means of the self-realization of Christ. Here is where we come the nearest to agreeing with Robinson's view of the Church[3] and yet must sharply disagree. Christ fulfils Himself through His self-giving for the Church. But just as there was nothing lacking in the Kenosis, as we firmly believe, so there was (and is) nothing lacking in the Plerosis.

As to how Christ fulfils Himself through the Kenosis, our only analogy is necessarily a human one; but since, as we have just been saying, we must think of Him as personal, we believe the analogy is not amiss. It is in the same manner that any person finds his fulfilment through self-giving. It is self-fulfilment in the same sense that a person expends his thought, time and energy in some noble cause and thus comes to his own life's enrichment as well as the achievement of

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1. Mackintosh, op. cit., p. 473.

2. I am indebted to Forsyth's chapter, "The Plerosis, or the Self-Fulfilment of Christ," op. cit., pp. 323 ff.; Mackintosh's chapter, "The Self-Realization of Christ," op. cit., pp. 491 ff.; and F. R. M. Hitchcock's article, "The Pleroma as the Medium of the Self-Realization of Christ," The Expositor, Vol. XXIV, pp. 135 ff.

3. Discussed supra, Chapter IV.

life's purpose. It is the self-fulfilment of love which gives and does not count the cost, whose primary reward is the fact that another life has benefited and the knowledge that the right thing has been done. It is the self-fulfilment of a person who sacrifices his life in some heroic action, whose only reward (in this world) is the knowledge that he has followed in the train of nobility. It is the self-fulfilment of generosity by which the giver is enriched more than the recipient. The self-realization of Christ is but the working out in His own life the principle which He gave to His disciples:

> "For whosoever would save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the Gospel's shall save it."[1]

It is this paradox which places the cross in its proper light. The depth of the Kenosis revealed most truly the Pleroma, the true nature of God. Far from denying the reality of God, the cross affirmed it. Far from repudiating that God's nature is love, the cross demonstrated it.

The deepest humiliation of Christ, therefore, was in a real sense a glorification. This is the truth which we find portrayed so vividly in the Fourth Gospel.[2] The glorification was not merely to follow the humiliation. We find this thought in several other writers[3] and shall have more to say about it presently. But the Fourth Evangelist affirms that His humiliation <u>was</u> His glory. If the end was glorious, then the means

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1. Mark viii. 35; Cf. Matt. x. 39 and John xii. 25.
2. John xii. 23-32; xiii. 31; xvii. 1.
3. Luke xxiv. 26; Phil. ii. 9-11; Hebrews ii. 9; xii. 2; I Pet. i. 11.

was also glorious. Archbishop Temple writes:

> "The incarnation was an act of sacrifice and of humiliation --- real however voluntary. But that is not the last word. For the sacrifice and the humiliation are the divine glory. If God is Love, His glory most of all shines forth in whatever most fully expresses love. The Cross of shame is the throne of glory."[1]

> "What we see is not any mere parable of the Life of God, not an interval of humiliation between two eternities of glory. It is the divine glory itself. As we watch that human Life we do not say: 'Ah --- but soon He will return to the painless joy of the glory which was His and will be His again.' As we watch that Life and, above all, that Death we say, 'We behold His glory.'"[2]

Likewise A. B. Bruce writes:

> "Christ's whole state of exinanition was not only worthy to be rewarded by a subsequent state of exaltation, but was in itself invested with moral sublimity and dignity; so that, having in view the honour of the Saviour, we have no interest in minimizing His experience of humiliation, but, on the contrary, are concerned to vindicate for that experience the utmost possible fulness, recognizing no limit to the descent except that arising out of His sinlessness."[3]

This is very close to the thought of the Apostle Paul also. Because the cross revealed God's amazing love, and because it stood for the redemption so real in his own life, it became his chief object of glory:

> "Far be it from me to glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."[4]

> "We preach Christ crucified, unto Jews a stumbling-block, and unto Gentiles foolishness; but unto them that are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God."[5]

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1. Temple, Readings in St. John's Gospel, p. 14.
2. Temple, Christus Veritas, p. 144.
3. Bruce, op. cit., pp. 35 f.
4. Gal. vi. 14.
5. I Cor. i. 23-24.

But doubtless there is a real truth also in the teaching that the cross was followed by glorification. This seems to be the thought of the Kenosis passage in Philippians:

> "Wherefore also God highly exalted Him, and gave unto Him the name which is above every name; that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things on earth and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."[1]

Here the most natural meaning is that Christ is given an exaltation because of His Kenosis. Perhaps the exaltation, while it may be looked upon as a reward, is best thought of as the logical and inevitable result of the Kenosis. Be that as it may, the logical inference is that the Son has a glory which was not His in the pre-Incarnate state. The difference is not in the natural glory which pertains to Being, which would necessarily be the same. It is the added glory of having become the Messiah, the Saviour, and our Eternal High Priest, which He could not claim prior to the Incarnation.[2] Bensow has well said:

> "Der Sohn hatte bei der Kenose die Krone des regnum potentiae abgelegt, um König im Reich der Gnade zu werden."[3]

As "King in the realm of grace," He sees of "the travail of His soul and is satisfied."[4] This, too, is His Plerosis through Kenosis.

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1. Phil. ii. 9-11.
2. Vincent has a good note on this, ICC, Philippians, pp. 86 f.
3. Bensow, op. cit., p. 306.
4. From Isaiah liii. 11.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE PARADOX WITH REFERENCE TO THE ATONEMENT.

The concepts involved in Pleroma and Kenosis are also essential to an appreciation of the Atonement. Pleroma, as we have said, suggests the Person --- who it is of whom we speak; and Kenosis tells of the deed. In Pleroma we think primarily of Christology and in Kenosis of Soteriology. But these mutually involve each other.

Any view taken of the Atonement is bound up inseparably with whatever concept is held of Christ as a Person. That is why a true Christology is essential to a true concept of salvation. A full salvation and a "toned down Christology" are mutually exclusive.

On the other hand, it may be argued that Christology itself is determined by Soteriology, and certainly there is some truth in this. We have already observed that many think that St. Paul's Christology was primarily due to his own experience of redemption.[1] The same is true today with any Christian. The printed page and the proclaimed Gospel may seem as so many "idle tales" until the Word takes hold of a person and he experiences in his own life the meaning of redemption. The experience itself is necessary to a true estimate of Christ. It is impossible to stand off as an "unbiased" spectator and arrive at the true facts as to His nature. That is one reason

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1. See supra, p. 78.

that the "back to the historical Jesus" movement could never have succeeded in giving us a true estimate of Him, for it assumed that if we could only divorce Him from faith long enough to see Him in an unbiased manner, we should find a quite simple Galilean teacher. But faith itself is quite an essential element in the discovery. It is well known that the same historical facts may call forth opposite responses depending upon the estimate of faith. The same historical Jesus, as objective fact, was hailed by some as "the Christ, the Son of the living God,"[1] and by others as an impostor. The cross, as objective fact, was once to Paul a "stumblingblock," but later became his "chief glory." That is why Christology can never be divorced from Soteriology.

We shall now turn our attention to the Atonement as St. Paul presents it; then we shall come back to the relevance of Pleroma and Kenosis to the doctrine. Unfortunately the Apostle did not leave behind a systematized treatise on the Atonement. Otherwise, he would have saved theologians a great amount of trouble and, incidentally, the world a great deal of ink. It is more correct to speak of his "views" of the Atonement than his "view" of it, for he uses various terms and figures of speech. However, as we study the different metaphors, we find that they reinforce each other and we can see fairly accurately the general pattern of the mosaic. Stated briefly, Paul's teaching is that Christ, the Son of God, was sent forth in the fulness of the time, and in accordance with God's purpose and

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1. Matt. xvi. 16.

in revelation of His love, "died for our sins."[1]

An understanding of the terms used by St. Paul is not easy, for our interpretation of them depends partly upon their connotation in the Old Testament and partly upon the new meaning put into them by Christianity itself, and on these points there is a wide variance of opinion. The main thing to keep in mind is that behind all symbols there was a reality which Paul was trying to depict, and that reality is the obliteration of our sins and our restored relationship to God. We are not now speaking of victory over temptation, which falls into a different category. Rather, we are speaking of something done relative to our sins, committed and past. Paul's view of the Atonement may be summarized under six heads, most of them derived from the metaphors which he uses to describe it.

(1) Atonement means "redemption" (ἀπολύτρωσις and its cognates).

> ". . . . in whom we have our redemption. . . ."[2]
>
> ". . . . whom God made our wisdom, our righteousness and consecration and redemption."[3]

With such passages should be compared also:

> "Ye are not your own; ye were bought with a price."[4]

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1. I Cor. xv. 3.
2. Col. i. 14.
3. I Cor. i. 30. Cf. Rom. iii. 24; Eph. i. 7, 14; and iv. 30.
4. I Cor. vi. 19-20. Cf. vii. 23.

And likewise the words of Jesus:

> "For the Son of Man also came not to be ministered unto but to minister, and to give His life a ransom (λύτρον) for many."[1]

C. H. Dodd says that this term and its cognates were commonly used by the writers of the period with reference to the liberation of slaves and prisoners of war, as many inscriptions attest.[2] In the Old Testament the "ransom" price was the price paid in redemption of a life charged with some grave offense.[3] A murderer, however, could have no ransom price at all; his blood was required as the only adequate equation of the life of the murdered.[4] Later, however, this was qualified somewhat so that the relatives of the murdered could choose whether they might accept some payment or whether they would demand the life of the murderer. When David sought to make "atonement" for the sins of Saul against the Gibeonites, the latter refused any appeasement in terms of money and demanded the lives of seven of Saul's sons.[5]

Professor Dodd further points out that at times the term is used without any reference to "ransom price" and means simply "emancipation." The word is thus used of the "redemption" or "emancipation" of the Israelites from Egypt.[6] However, the

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1. Mark x. 45 and parallel passage, Matt. xx. 28. I see no reason for discrediting these words as genuine from the lips of Jesus, as opposed to some form critics. I need only refer to the excellent treatment of the verse by William Manson, op. cit., pp. 131 ff.

2. Dodd, MNTC, Romans, p. 53. See also Deissmann, Light from the Ancient East, on "redemption."

3. Exodus xxi. 28-31.

4. Numbers xxxv. 31-34.

5. II Sam. xxi. 1-9.

6. Deut. vii. 8. Dodd, MNTC, Romans, p. 54.

root idea of "redemption" is that freedom is purchased at great cost.

(2) Atonement means "justification" (δικαιοσύνη and its cognates). These are favorite terms with Paul and he uses them numerous places.

> "By the works of the law shall no flesh be justified. . . . But now apart from the law a righteousness of God hath been manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ unto all them that believe; for there is no distinction; for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. . . ."[1]

These terms have given rise to the so-called "penal" or "juridical" theory of the Atonement. Its setting is the law-court. The sinner stands before God guilty. Yet God pronounces him, through his faith in Christ, acquitted. This makes a monstrosity of justice, worse than that against which the prophets rebelled, except for one factor --- something that Christ has done for the sinner. Between the sinner's known guilt and his righteousness which is accepted is the act of Christ. However, there is a wide difference of opinion among theologians as to what that act involved. Some explain it as Christ's bearing the punishment which otherwise would have come to the sinner; others say that His sacrifice satisfied divine justice; others interpret it as an act of "perfect penitence" which God accepts for us as we identify ourselves with it; others affirm that Christ so identified Himself with the consequences of human sin that His sacrifice had a "representative character" so that

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1. Romans iii. 20-24.

Christ can be thought of as having truly died "for us," "on our behalf," "for our sins," but not in the sense of either "substitution" or "punishment"; others find an answer in the Old Testament concept of sacrifice as both "representative" and "substitutionary," but not in the sense of "punishment."

It will be observed that the primary basis of this concept of the Atonement is the ethical concept of religion. Religion is also a spiritual relationship (which is involved in the term "reconciliation," to be considered presently), but we cannot get away from the fact that sin is also ethical and as such means guilt. Further, such guilt is always primarily against God:

> "Against Thee, Thee only have I sinned, and done this evil in Thy sight."[1]

That sin is guilt is written into the very constitution of man, his conscience bearing witness and his thoughts "accusing or else excusing"[2] him.

If sin has an ethical aspect, then the Atonement must likewise. Somehow, the guilt is removed. The controversial issue here is whether the sacrifice of Christ is to be regarded as "substitutionary." Principal Vincent Taylor, who may be taken as representative of many conservative scholars, maintains that it is not.[3] He holds that it is "representative," "penal"

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1. Psalm li. 4.

2. Romans ii. 15.

3. Taylor, Jesus and His Sacrifice, pp. 281 ff.; and The Atonement in New Testament Teaching, pp. 86 f., 123 ff., 127 ff., 147, 255 ff., and 269 ff.

in the sense of voluntarily entering into the sufferings of humanity due to sin, and therefore "vicarious," but not "substitutionary" and not "punishment." His view may be summarized as follows:

> "The truer view of the representative activity of Jesus is one which recognizes that in His suffering and death He has expressed and effected that which no individual man has the power or the spirituality to achieve, but into which, in virtue of an ever-deepening fellowship with Him, men can progressively enter so that it becomes their offering to God."[1]

Again:

> "In perfect filial accord with the Father's will, and moved by the greatness of His love for sinners, Christ came under the curse of sin and shared its penalty. There is no question of the transference of punishment from their shoulders to His own, still less any thought of a measured equivalent of suffering: what is meant is that in the work of redemption Christ submitted to the judgment of God upon sin."[2]

His idea becomes even more evident in his interpretation of pertinent Scripture passages, especially those which speak of Christ's having been made "to be sin on our behalf,"[3] and His "having become a curse for us."[4]

> "The two passages in question use the language of paradox, perhaps the only kind of language suitable to such a theme. What St. Paul means when he says of God that He made Christ to be 'sin on our behalf' is that Christ voluntarily came under the blight of sin, entered into its deepest gloom, and shared with men its awful weight and penalty. The same idea is doubtless implicit in the statement of Galatians iii. 13, that He became

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1. Taylor, Jesus and His Sacrifice, p. 281.
2. Taylor, The Atonement in New Testament Thought, p. 131.
3. II Cor. v. 21.
4. Gal. iii. 13.

> 'a curse for us,' although here the idea is expressed, not only in paradox, but also in the course of a polemical argument. . . . A spiritual expression of reprobation is meant, and since this cannot be personal, it must be participation in the reprobation which rests upon sin."[1]

Perhaps it is not fair to the author to express a difference of opinion at this one point without giving further all the arguments he sets forth in support of his view, which we cannot do here. We may mention in passing that the chief exegetical reason is that nowhere is it stated that Christ suffered "instead of us" (ἀντὶ ἡμῶν), but always "for us" (ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν or περὶ ἡμῶν).[2] Yet, while ἀντί is the more precise word for "substitution," ὑπέρ is sometimes used instead.[3] I cannot but think that "substitution" was also a part of the Pauline concept and that this finds its basis in the Old Testament sacrifices. There the sacrifice was not merely "representative" but "instead of." The original basis of the <u>blood</u> sacrifice was that a man's sin against God demanded the utmost sacrifice, the life itself, of which the blood was the symbol. At the same time, human life naturally being considered so highly precious and practically indispensable, the life of an animal was offered "instead." The animal was "representative" but basicly because it was "instead of."

Surely the very thought of redemption means that we need not simply someone to "share" the penalty of sin but who removes it entirely; not someone who "participates" in the

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1. Taylor, <u>The Atonement in New Testament Thought</u>, pp. 127 f.

2. See <u>Ibid</u>., p. 86.

3. I Cor. xv. 29; Col. i. 7; Philemon 13; etc.

curse but who bears it Himself, and this, I think, is the natural interpretation of these passages.

At the same time we would agree most heartily with Principal Taylor that there is no thought of "punishment" or of "a measured equivalent of suffering." Surely it is significant that nowhere in the New Testament do we find any such statement that Jesus was punished for our sins. Nor is there any suggestion that the offering is to placate a wrathful God.[1]

(3) Atonement means "reconciliation to God" (καταλλαγή ἀποκαταλλάσσω and cognates). The fundamental idea of sin presupposed in this concept is "estrangement" from God. As the prophet Isaiah says:

> "Ah, sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity. . . . they have despised the Holy One of Israel, they are estranged and gone backward."[2]

Salvation, then, is regarded as reconciliation to God:

> "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not reckoning unto them their trespasses, and having committed unto us the word of reconciliation. We are ambassadors therefore on behalf of Christ, as though God were entreating by us: we beseech you on behalf of Christ, be ye reconciled to God."[3]

It is to be emphasized that the reconciliation is that of man to God and not vice versa. The very fact that it is God who provides the means of reconciliation is an indication that He is not to be thought of as one whose wrath must be appeased. Rather, it is man who by sin has separated himself from God,

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1. Taylor, Jesus and His Sacrifice, pp. 294, 304, and in general. A sacrifice was chiefly a "self-offering" as Taylor very well brings out. (Aside from the one point of difference mentioned above, I would pay high tribute to these two volumes).

2. Isaiah i. 4.

3. II. Cor. v. 19-20. Cf. Rom. v. 10-11; Col. i. 20-22.

has erected a barrier between himself and fellowship with God. Yet, the irony of the situation is that man's own nature has become corrupted in the very process of separation and his only hope of becoming otherwise lies in coming in touch with God, the sole source of goodness. The result is that his only hope is that God Himself will cross the barrier and come to him. This, according to St. Paul, is precisely what He did in Christ:

> "And you, being in time past alienated and enemies in your mind in your evil works, yet now hath He reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy and without blemish and unreproveable before Him."[1]

(4) Atonement means the "expiation" of sin (ἱλαστήριος and cognates). Under this same heading should be considered all terms which denote Christ's death as a "sacrifice," such terms as "blood," "offering," "our Passover," "cleansing," "washing," and his teaching about the Eucharist.[2] In particular the following passages should be noted:

> "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin (or, as an offering for sin), condemned sin in the flesh. . . ."[3]

> "And walk in love, even as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for an odor of a sweet smell."[4]

> "For our Passover also is sacrificed, even Christ."[5]

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1. Col. i. 21-22. The textual variations need not concern us here.
2. I Cor. x. 16-22; xi. 20-34.
3. Rom. viii. 3.
4. Eph. v. 2.
5. I Cor. v. 7.

> ". . . . whom God put forward as an <u>expiation</u> by His blood. . . ."[1]

Thus there is abundant evidence that St. Paul thought of the death of Christ as our "sacrifice," which idea is worked out more elaborately by the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews.[2]

We cannot here enter upon a detailed account of the interesting history back of ἱλαστήριος, but we may refer to the findings of Professor Dodd who has made a thorough study of it.[3] He concludes that whereas the word is used in pagan writers predominately in the sense of "placating" a deity, this meaning is practically unknown in the Septuagint where the connotation is rather "to expiate a sin, i.e., to perform some act by which guilt is annulled."[4] In the Old Testament there are passages in which it appears that the anger of God is turned away or allayed by some sacrifice or deed.[5] But these are exceptional cases and not the general rule; and never is God the object of the verb in the sense of "I protitiate God," which is so common in pagan sources.[6] The word should be translated therefore as "expiation" rather than "propitiation."[7] Here again, the very fact that the <u>source</u> of the expiation is God and not man is proof that it is not God's anger that is being placated. God's merciful attitude is not the result of the process but its cause and source.

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1. Rom. iii. 25. Cf. I John ii. 2; iv. 10; and Heb. ii. 17.

2. Heb. ix. 13-14, 26-28; x. 1-18, 22; and xiii. 12-13.

3. Dodd, <u>MNTC, Romans</u>, pp. 54 f. For his fuller account see <u>Journal of Theological Studies</u>, Vol. XXXII, pp. 352 ff.

4. <u>Ibid</u>.

5. Ex. xxx. 12; Num. viii. 19; xvi. 45-50; xxv. 6-11.

6. See article "Expiation and Atonement" in Hastings's <u>Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics</u>, Vol. 5, pp. 651 ff.

7. The Revised Standard Version so translates it.

(5) Atonement means that Christ has won the signal victory over the forces of evil, however they are to be conceived.

> ". . . . having despoiled the principalities and the powers, He made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it." (the cross, or, "in Him" if God is understood as the subject).[1]

This view of the Atonement as the conquest of the cosmic forces of evil has been strongly presented by Bishop Gustaf Aulén.[2] He contends that this "classic" view of the Atonement is supported by Scripture, the primitive Church and by Martin Luther, and further that the legalistic and juristic conceptions together with all such thoughts as "satisfaction," "merit," "substitution," and so forth, originated in Medieval theology, finding voice especially in Anselm's Cur Deus Homo. According to Bishop Aulén, the Atonement is a cosmic drama in which God in Christ meets and overcomes the hostile powers and brings man back into his true relationship to Himself.

All of this seems to be strictly Pauline from one aspect.[3] The weakness in Bishop Aulén's argument is in its exclusiveness rather than inclusiveness. He makes this the total view of the Atonement. Also, he forgets that St. Paul often speaks in figures which are not always intended to be taken absolutely literally. The passage from which the above quotation comes is full of figures, the cancellation of an

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1. Col. ii. 15.
2. Aulén, Christus Victor.
3. See supra, pp. 67 ff., and Appendix C.

indictment, nailing it to the cross, and leading His enemies in public display behind the cross as His chariot. Further, this "classic" view of the Atonement, taken alone, leaves unanswered several problems:

a. Just how are we to understand the victory of Christ in this "cosmic drama" and how are the hostile powers to be conceived?

b. In what sense is the victory to be thought of as "realized" and in what sense is it eschatological? For it is evident that our struggle with evil still continues.

c. Just how is Christ's victory over the "evil powers" to be translated into ours?

d. What provision does the cosmic victory make for our moral failures, or guilt? How can victory over evil as a "power" act as Atonement for evil as guilt?

The point we are making is that while there may be a real truth in the thought of the victory of Christ over the forces of evil, however they are to be conceived, this one aspect must be taken along with others to make the mosaic complete.

(6) Finally, Atonement means a shared victory with Christ in His resurrection glory. We are made partakers with Him in His victory over sin and death itself, and in His resurrection and life eternal. Perhaps all this may be thought of as the

result of the Atonement, yet it is so bound up with the Apostle's thought of the total picture of redemption as to be a part of it. In Pauline thought, belief in the resurrection and eternal life was not merely a steeple to be added to what might be considered a very good edifice without it. It was basic to the whole structure, without which everything would collapse.[1]

All of the phases of the Atonement as described above are a part of the Pauline concept. Professor Donald Baillie, referring to the various metaphors which Paul uses, rightly says:

> "But it is good to let one figure of speech correct and supplement another, and to remind ourselves that all of these are but attempts to exhibit the love of God dealing with the sin of the world and overcoming it as only love can do."[2]

Having examined the Pauline concept of the Atonement, we now turn back to the words, Pleroma and Kenosis, to note two important truths which they suggest regarding this doctrine. These truths are axiomatic to all Pauline thoughts of the Atonement.

The first is that the Atonement had to take place from within humanity. The word "Kenosis" declares that this is precisely what happened. While the Atonement was God's act and while He did for us what we could never have done for ourselves, nevertheless it was not an act of God per se, but of the God-man.

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1. I Cor. xv. 12-19.
2. Baillie, op. cit., p. 200.

The offering, while from God, was also to Him, from another side. Nor was the manhood merely instrumental, but integral and necessary. Bishop Aulén entirely fails to see that the Atonement had to take place from the human side, an offering from man to God. If it were merely a "cosmic drama," then we could imagine that the conflict might have taken place in some metaphysical arena after the pattern of the mythical conflicts of the Greek gods. But Paul never tires of emphasizing the historic nature of the Atonement.[1] All of the Adam comparisons are based upon the idea that Christ, taking upon Himself the flesh of the first Adam, reversed the sinful process.

The Old Testament sacrificial system gives evidence to the same effect. Since man was the offender it was logical that he should be the one to present a sacrifice to God. In like manner, when the supreme sacrifice was made, it needs must be from the side of man.

Of course it is not for us to say that it would have been impossible for God to redeem mankind apart from the Incarnation. But upon such an hypothesis we get into the realm of pure speculation. All that we can say is that He did redeem mankind from within manhood and that St. Paul stresses this fact. Being thus identified with us through the Kenosis, He is fully qualified to be our representative before God, both our High Priest and our sacrifice.

The second truth is that the sacrifice had to be of

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1. Col. i. 19-20, 22; Eph. ii. 13-14; etc. Compare likewise the stress laid upon the historic element of the Atonement by the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, ii. 11-18; iv. 15; v. 7-10; etc.

an absolute nature, ultimate, final, once-for-all. Here, as in the preceding case, the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews brings this out most clearly as he compares the transitoriness of the Aaronic sacrifices and the absoluteness of Christ's.[1] But likewise, there is never the slightest doubt of this in the mind of Paul, and the reason --- because in Him dwelt the whole Pleroma of the Godhead bodily. It was for this reason that He, and He alone, could reconcile all things to God.

> "That divine vocation was only possible to one who had a divine position."[2]

It was this that made all the difference between His death and the death of any noble martyr. Christ was not merely a man who was supremely God-conscious; or a man who so completely revealed the love of God that for us He has the religious value of God; or a man filled with the Holy Spirit as never before and never again. All such affirmations, true so far as they go, fall short of interpreting the mind of Paul. However worthy the intentions of such interpreters may be, however much we may esteem their personal characters, and whatever sway their theology may have for a day, they are not deriving their Christology from the mind of Paul. Such views, therefore, are doomed to transiency, for men will always come back demanding an Atonement that is ultimate, final, absolute, and this they will find in St. Paul's presentation of the work of Christ. The one "who gave Himself for our sins,"[3] while truly man, was

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1. Hebrews in general, but especially vi. 26-28 and x. 10-14.
2. Forsyth, op. cit., p. 320.
3. Gal. i. 4. Cf. I Cor. xv. 3.

divine, the one in whom "all the Pleroma of God was pleased to dwell."

Any true apprehension of the Person and work of Christ will always bring us back to such concepts as are involved in Pleroma and Kenosis. Yet at best, as we contemplate who He is and what He did for us, we are led to say with the Psalmist:

> "Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it."[1]

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1. Psalm cxxxix. 6.

A P P E N D I X

APPENDIX A.

THE PLEROMA OF VALENTINUS.[1]

According to Valentinus and other Gnostics of the second and third centuries A. D., the Pleroma was a region above where the Deity and His subordinate powers were thought of as having their abode, completely separated from the mundane universe. The Pleroma of Valentinus was typical of the general concept among the Gnostics, though his was more elaborately worked out than some of the others. There were many variations of the general idea.

According to Gwatkin,[2] Valentinus was the greatest of the Gnostics, an acute thinker with a touch of mysticism. Local tradition made him a native of the coast of Egypt. However, he came to Rome and was there roughly 138-161 A. D.

Consistency was not a Gnostic virtue. In fact, inconsistency and lack of clarity served a useful purpose in adding to the mystery. Further, Valentinus gave different names to the same Aeons and sometimes called different Aeons by the same name. To assist in keeping the record straight I shall call attention to any double designations of the same Aeon; and where there are two or more Aeons which bear the same name, I shall make use of Roman numerals. For example, there are three Christs whom I shall call Christ I, Christ II, and Christ III.

(To page 188).

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1. I am taking my information largely from Irenaeus, op. cit., I, i-xii; and II, iii. ff. Cf. Hippolytus, op. cit., VI, xxiv-xxxii and X, ix. See also the discussion of Pleroma with reference to the Colossian heresy, supra, pp. 67 ff.

2. Gwatkin, Early Church History, Vol. II, pp. 36 ff.

A DIAGRAM OF

THE PLEROMA OF VALENTINUS.

THE OGDOAD

Bythos (Profundity) — Sige (Silence)

Stauros or Horus

Monogenes (also called Nous) — Aletheia
Stauros (also called Horus)
Christ
Holy Spirit

Logos — Zoe

Anthropos — Ecclesia

Jesus

THE DECAD
(From Logos and Zoe)

Bythias (Deep)	Mixis (Mingling)
Ageratos (Undecaying)	Henosis (Union)
Autophyes (Self-existent)	Hedone (Pleasure)
Acinetos (Immovable)	Syncrasis (Blending)
Monogenes (Only-Begotten)	Macaria (Happiness)

THE DUODECAD
(From Anthropos and Ecclesia)

Paracletus (Advocate)	Pistis (Faith)
Patricos (Ancestral)	Elpis (Hope)
Metricos (Metrical)	Agape (Love)
Ainos (Praise)	Synesis (Understanding)
Ecclesiasticus (Ecclesiastical)	Macariotea (Felecity)
Theletos (Deciderated)	Sophia (Wisdom)

Stauros or Horus

Valentinus divided his Pleroma into three parts, an Ogdoad, a Decad, and a Duodecad. The Ogdoad, as the name suggests, originally had eight Aeons, but later Monogenes gave birth (having within himself the power to do so) to Christ, the Holy Spirit, and Stauros (Cross, also called Horus, or Boundary). So the number of Aeons in the Ogdoad was not fixed at eight. Stauros, or Horus, was conceived as a series of crosses, or a fence, around the bottom of the Pleroma guarding it from pollution from everything outside. Stauros also formed a boundary around Bythos (Profundity) so that nothing could pass into his particular sphere, for he was the unknowable and unfathomable. (It is to be observed that instead of the cross being the way of access to the Father as Christianity taught, Valentinus made it just the opposite). Further, the Aeons were paired, but in some cases the male was said to possess within himself the full power of generation, as in the case of Bythos and Monogenes.

From Word and Life in the Ogdoad there came ten Aeons which composed the Decad, and from Man and Church in the Ogdoad came twelve Aeons which composed the Duodecad. Thus, if we count only eight Aeons in the Ogdoad, the total number was thirty. Interestingly enough, it was maintained that this thirty was derived from the fact that Jesus was thirty years of age when He began His ministry;[1] and also the thirty Aeons were most plainly indicated in the parable of the Laborers[2] in which some were sent at the first hour, others at the third, others

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1. Luke iii. 23.
2. Matt. xx. 1-16.

at the sixth, others at the ninth, and still others at the eleventh, a total of thirty.[1]

The thirtieth Aeon, Achamoth (also called Sophia), in her passion to know the unknowable attempted to ascend to Bythos. She fell into great distress, descended from the Pleroma, and in her despair and distress brought forth a formless offspring.[2] Horus (Stauros), however, came forth and rescued her and restored her to her place in the Pleroma, but shut her formless offspring on the outside. This formless offspring was also called Achamoth and Sophia, whom we shall hereafter speak of as Achamoth II. It was from her that the mundane universe was derived, as we shall see.

It was then that Monogenes (also called Nous) gave birth to a pair of Aeons called Christ and the Holy Spirit. Christ taught that the Aeons must be content as they are and must understand that they cannot know the unknowable except through Monogenes only. The Holy Spirit so united the Aeons in harmony that in their joy at the happy result they all collectively decided to form a new Aeon, each one furnishing something of finest beauty and preciousness. The new Aeon they called Jesus, whom hereafter we shall designate as Jesus (Christ II). Likewise, as an honor to Him, they created a retinue of angels of like nature as Himself. Because of His composite nature, the Scripture says, "In Him dwelleth all the Pleroma of the Godhead."

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1. For the possible derivation of the number thirty from Pythagoras, see supra, pp. 31 f.

2. The Gnostics held that in generation the male gives form; the female substance.

Achamoth II, being thus excluded from the Pleroma, dwelling in darkness and being greatly excited, Christ I had pity on her, extended Himself beyond Stauros and imparted to her form as regards substance, but not intelligence. He then withdrew back to his place in the Pleroma. Achamoth II desired to follow Him but was forbidden by Stauros. In response to her pleas, Christ I would not return but sent to her instead Jesus (Christ II) who imparted to her form as respected intelligence. He was not able to take away her passions but somewhat condensed and segregated them in such a way that evil could be distinguished from good. On this account they said that Jesus (Christ II) virtually created the world, but not actually, for this was the work of Metropater (see below).

Achamoth II became the origin of the following:

(1) From her own nature, she gave birth to a hierarchy of spiritual beings patterned after the Pleroma (in Platonic fashion, for they said that all things below took place according to the pattern above). Also, to <u>some</u> men (see below) she imparted a spiritual nature, among whom the Gnostics counted themselves.

(2) From her desire to return to Christ I, her Conversion, she gave birth to animal (psychical) nature. This included a Demiurge named Metropater (also called Apater, born of a mother, without father). It is he who became the creator of the world, the God of the Old Testament. Metropater created man after his own nature (psychical). But into some of these,

as we have mentioned, Achamoth II "infused" her spiritual nature, unbeknown to Metropater. Metropater also created the seven heavens, above which he dwells. Achamoth II has her abode above that. Metropater also created from grief spirits of wickedness, headed by Cosmocrator[1] (Satan, the prince of this world), whose domain is the world. Metropater was ignorant of all above him, even his own mother; wherefore he declared through the prophets of the Old Testament, "I am God and besides me there is none else."

(3) From her passions came material nature, including carnal man. Irenaeus says:

> "All other things owed their beginning to her terror and sorrow. For from her tears all that is of a liquid nature was formed, from her smile all that is lucent, and from her grief and perplexity all the corporeal elements of the world."[2]

He then suggests, in derision, that he might add something to their system, for seeing that some waters are fresh while others are saline, only the saline waters were derived from her tears, while the fresh waters, fountains, rivers and rain came from the perspiration of her agony.[3]

It is thus seen that there were three classes of men, the spiritual, the psychical, and the carnal. The spiritual man was saved by reason of his nature. Nothing which he might do could corrupt him:

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1. This name was derived from Eph. vi. 12. (See the Greek).
2. Irenaeus, op. cit., I, iv, 2.
3. Ibid., I, iv, 4.

> "For even as gold, when submersed in filth, loses not on that account its beauty, but retains its own native qualities, the filth having no power to injure the gold, so they affirm that they cannot in any measure suffer hurt or lose their spiritual substance, whatever the material actions in which they may be involved."[1]

Psychical man might go either way depending upon his faith and good works. The ordinary Christians belonged to this class, for whom the Saviour was sent (see below). Carnal man was beyond all hope. Nothing could assist him because his nature was impossible of salvation.

For the sake of men of the second class, the Saviour, Jesus (Christ III), was sent. He was a composite creation, receiving His spiritual nature from Achamoth II, his psychical nature from Metropater, and his body --- not a material one --- by special dispensation:

> "He was begirt by a special dispensation with a body endowed with an animal nature, yet constructed with unspeakable skill, so that it might be visible and tangible, and capable of enduring suffering. At the same time, they deny that He assumed anything material since indeed matter is incapable of salvation."[2]

At the baptism, Jesus (Christ II) descended upon Jesus (Christ III), but departed again during the trial before Pilate. Thus Jesus (Christ II) remained free from all suffering since it was impossible that He should suffer who was at once incomprehensible and invisible. Further, not even the "seed" which He had received from the mother (Achamoth II) was

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1. Ibid, I, vi, 2.
2. Ibid., I, vi, 1.

subject to suffering, for this too, being spiritual, was impassible. It follows, then, that only the psychical Jesus (Christ III) together with His body --- not material --- underwent suffering.

At the end of time, at the consummation of all things, Achamoth II will pass from her intermediate place to the Pleroma to become the bride of Jesus (Christ II). Metropater will move up to the intermediate place vacated by Achamoth II. Spiritual men will have two destinies since they are both spiritual and psychical. Their "spirits" will pass, along with Achamoth II, into the Pleroma to become the brides of the angels of Jesus (Christ II). Their souls will pass into that intermediate habitation with Metropater. To this place will come also the souls redeemed from the second class of men who by faith and good works have proved themselves worthy. But by no means do they find admittance into the Pleroma. (It is not said what happens to Jesus (Christ III).

When these things have taken place, then shall that fire which lies hidden in the world blaze forth and burn, and while destroying all matter shall also be extinguished along with it.[1]

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1. Irenaeus gives additional details throughout which have been omitted in this sketch.

APPENDIX B.

THE USE OF PLEROMA IN PISTIS SOPHIA.

Pistis Sophia is one of the few extant Gnostic writings. The authorship of the work is doubtful. Some scholars have accredited it to Valentinus, while others think its origin lies with the Ophites. Neither of these may be correct. The date is also in doubt but broadly speaking we may place it between 140 and 300 A. D.

The meaning of "Pleroma" in this document is not fixed as can be seen in the sample quotations to be given. We shall not attempt to describe the use. The quotations will speak for themselves.

> "And Jesus said to His disciples: 'I am come from that first mystery, which is also the last mystery, the four and twentieth mystery.' For His disciples knew not that mystery, nor did they understand that there was anything within that mystery; but they thought that that mystery indeed was the chief of the Pleroma, and the head of all that exists; and they thought it was the end of all ends. . . ."[1]

> "Nor had He (Jesus) told His disciples: 'I pass through such or such a region until I enter that mystery, or (when) I leave it;' but, in instructing them He merely said: 'I have come from that mystery.' And this is why they thought that it was the chief of the Pleroma, and even that it was the Pleroma itself. For Jesus said to His disciples: 'It is that mystery which surroundeth all the Pleromas of which I have spoken, from the day on which I first met with you even unto this day.' And this is, therefore, why the disciples thought there was nothing within that mystery."[2]

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1. All of these references are taken from G. R. S. Mead's translation of Pistis Sophia and are given by sections rather than pages. The above quotation is from Sections 1 and 2.

2. Ibid., Sections 3 and 4.

"It came to pass, when Jesus had finished speaking these things to His disciples, that He again continued in His conversation, and said unto them: 'Lo, I have put on my vesture, and all power hath been given me by the first mystery. Yet a little while and I will tell you the mystery of the Pleroma and the Pleroma of the Pleroma; I will conceal nothing from you from this hour, but in perfectness will I perfect you in the whole Pleroma and all perfection and every mystery, which things indeed are the perfection of all perfections, the Pleroma of all Pleromas, and the gnosis of all gnoses, which are in my vesture. I will tell you all mysteries from the exterior of the exteriors to the interior of the interiors.'"[1]

"Now, therefore, hearken, O my disciples, my friends and my brethren, that I may impel you to the understanding of that mystery of the ineffable. These things I say unto you, because I have already instructed you in every gnosis in the emanation of the Pleroma; for the emanation of the Pleroma is its gnosis."[2]

". . . . and all the bonds with which they (the Powers of the firmament) were bound were loosed; each left his rank, and they bowed down before me (Jesus) and worshipped me, saying, 'How hath the Lord of the Pleroma changed us without our knowing?' And they sang together to the interior of the interiors."[3]

"But when the Pleroma is completed, that is to say, when the number of perfect souls shall be reached, and the mystery shall be accomplished according to which the Pleroma is the Pleroma, I shall pass a thousand years, according to the years of the light, reigning over all the emanations of the light and the whole number of perfect souls who shall have received all the mysteries."[4]

"It came to pass, when Mary had finished saying these things, that Jesus said unto her: 'Well said, Mary, since thou art blessed before all women who are on the earth, for thou shalt be the Pleroma of all Pleromas, and the perfection of all perfections.'"[5]

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1. Ibid., Sections 15 and 16.
2. Ibid., Sections 218 and 219.
3. Ibid., Section 21.
4. Ibid., Section 243.
5. Ibid., Sections 28 and 29.

APPENDIX C.

THE MEANING OF STOICHEIA.

The meaning of this word in Colossians ii. 8 and 20 and in Galatians iv. 3 and 9 has a definite bearing upon our understanding of these passages and is more generally important in Colossians as affecting the interpretation of the Colossian heresy.

The history of this word is interesting indeed. Signifying originally a "row" or "ordered sequence," it came to be used of the alphabet, and thence of anything elementary (see Hebrews v. 12). It was next associated with the elements which compose the universe. Still later it broadened itself to include the heavenly bodies, in particular the planets. Since in some sources the elements of nature and the stars and planets were regarded as having their spirits[1] the word came to be applied to them as well. Such spirits, especially those which inhabited the stars and planets, were regarded as hostile to men. The belief in astrology was closely tied in with such a belief. According to such teaching, everything below happened according to the direction of the stars above. Hence, men were not their own free agents but were driven by irresistable forces, Fate, Destiny (εἱμαρμένη). The belief in dualism likewise played a part in the belief, for such powers as allegedly inhabited the mundane regions were evil, bent upon working their

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1. Jewish doctrine was also affected by the belief, only such spirits were spoken of as angels, Book of Jubilees, ii. 2; Testament of Levi, iv; Enoch xviii. 15; lx. 11; lxxxii. 10-14; IV Ezra viii. 20-22; Revelation vii. 1-2; xiv. 18; xvi. 5; xix. 17; and other places.

evil designs upon men and to keep them bound to the mundane.[1]

Three quotations will make this clearer. The first is from Wendland:

> "Verzweiflung über die niederdrückende Gewalt und den unerbittlichen Zwang der Sternenmächte, wie sie durch orientalischen Astralkult und Astrologie verbreitet wurden, hat die Sehnsucht nach Erlösung und Erhebung über die Gewalt der himmlischen Kräfte hervorgerufen. Die Stimmungen, gegen welche die Reaktion sich erhoben hat, treten uns jetzt beim Astrologen Valens in ihrer ganzen die Kräfte des Menschen lähmenden Gewalt gegenüber: Menschliche Freiheit ist eitler Wahn, des Schicksals Gesetze schlagen jeden in Ketten. Eine Beute und ein Spielball in den Händen der göttlichen Kräfte, besonders der bösen, die das Uebergewicht über die guten haben, wird der Mensch in die Leiblichkeit und Schuld, in die beständigen Irrungen des Lebens verstrickt und zur Strafe von den Geistern gequält und gepeinigt. Religiosität und Moral dieser Weltanschauung erschöpft sich in dem Rate, willenlos sich den Launen des Schicksals zu fügen, Trost und Hoffnung aufzugeben, als Soldat und Sklave der εἱμαρμένη ihr Kommando zu befolgen."[2]

The second is from Bevan:

> "The fear of these world-rulers, particularly the Sun, the Moon and the five planets, lay heavy on the old world. The Mysterious Seven held humanity in the mechanism of iron necessity."[3]

The third is from H. R. Mackintosh:

> "We need to remember that no salvation strictly confined to man's interior life could have won the adhesion of that old world. . . . What vexed men was not merely guilt and moral slackness; they also longed, perhaps still more passionately, to be redeemed from fate,

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1. For such ideas as the cruel, crushing power of Fate or other higher powers see Diogenes Laertius VII, 149; Cf. 135; and the Hermetica, Libellus I, 9, 15, 19; III, 2b-4; IX, 8; XVI, 13-16; and Excerpt XII.

2. Wendland, Die hellenistisch-römische Kultur, p. 171. Cf. p. 81. See also Reitzenstein, Poimandres, pp. 77-79, where he claims that the oppression of Fate turned men to the Mystery religions.

3. Bevan, Hellenism and Christianity, p. 77, quoted by Duncan, MNTC, Galatians, p. 135.

from this unintelligible world, from devils and death."[1]

Our problem then is whether when St. Paul uses the phrase "the stoicheia of the cosmos" he is referring merely to the "elementary things of the world," perhaps with a moral implication in the sense of "worldliness," or whether he is referring to the "spirits of the universe" according to the current concept of many.

I shall state my conclusion and then the reasons that have led me to it. I think the meaning which best fits in all cases, and especially in Colossians, is the latter, "the elementary spirits of the universe." At the same time, it does not follow that the Apostle himself believed in the reality of of such alleged spirits inhabiting the stars and planets and driving men with their cruel whip. We shall note these two conclusions in the order given.

(1) In both Galatians and Colossians the use is closely associated with bondage to unnecessary laws and regulations. In Galatians this does not mean that St. Paul equates the law of Moses and the laws and regulations supposedly imposed by the stoicheia (or rules and regulations for overcoming the stoicheia). The law of God given to Moses and thought of as mediated through the angels[2] was infinitely higher than any regulations thought of as pertaining to the stoicheia. Yet,

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1. Mackintosh, Originality of the Christian Message, pp. 95 f.

2. Gal. iii. 19. Cf. Acts vii. 38, 53; Book of Jubilees, i; and Josephus, Antiquities, XV, v, 3.

they both fell into the same category in one respect --- neither could act as a substitute for, nor a supplement to, the redemption of grace in Jesus Christ, and that was the big issue in Galatians. Perhaps, therefore, there was an intentional suggestion by St. Paul in his use of this word in this connection. If the Galatians should turn back from their new faith in Christ to an idea of redemption through the law, it would be all the same as going back to serve the "elemental spirits" of the cosmos. G. S. Duncan has a good note in this connection:

> "It does not follow that 'bondage to the elemental spirits,' the description which Paul gives of the pre-Christian religion in Galatia, could be applied simpliciter to the religion of Israel, or that he equates these elemental spirits with the angels who gave the Law. Nevertheless it is noteworthy that the features of Judaism which he specially selects for repudiation in verse 10 are not circumcision and food restrictions, but the observance of days and months and seasons and years, all of which were under the control of the heavenly bodies. There is a similar line of thought in Stephen's speech, where after their rejecting of the 'living oracles' the Israelites were, as is said, abandoned 'to the worship of the starry host' (Acts vii. 42). Without therefore equating them, Paul recognizes a close affinity between the 'angels' of the devout Jew and the 'elemental spirits' of the pagan. Both belong to the present age, and both have been robbed of their power by Christ."[1]

(2) In three of the contexts, the comparison is between personal agents and stoicheia, suggesting that the latter also is to be taken as personal. In Galatians iv. 3 and 9, the comparison is with "guardians and trustees." In Colossians ii. 8, the comparison is with Christ. In the fourth passage, Colossians ii. 20, there is nothing in the context to indicate

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1. Duncan, MNTC, Galatians, p. 136.

whether Paul is referring to personal or impersonal elements.

(3) Then, as Duncan points out in the note just quoted, the observance of days, months, seasons, and years points to things regulated by the heavenly bodies. This is also true in Colossians ii. 16 where Paul exhorts his readers to allow no one to pass judgment on them regarding food and drink or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath.

(4) The adjectives "weak and beggarly" (Gal. iv. 9) suggest personal agents.

Therefore it appears that Paul, in his use of stoicheia, was referring to "elemental spirits." But, as I have suggested, it does not follow that he himself believed in the reality of such alleged existencies. One may object that he would not have used the term in this sense had it not been a part of his own belief, but a close examination, I believe, reveals otherwise. In Galatians, he seems to equate "stoicheia" with "beings that by nature are no gods":

> "Formerly, when you did not know God, you were in bondage to beings that by nature are no gods; but now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, how can you turn back again to the weak and beggarly stoicheia whose slaves you want to be once more?"[1]

With this should be compared I Corinthians viii. 4-6:

> "Hence, as to the eating of food offered to idols, we know that an idol has no real existence, and that there is no God but one. For although there may be so-called gods in heaven or on earth --- as indeed there are many gods and many lords --- yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one

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1. Gal. iv. 8-9.

> Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist."

Thus in Galatians, the meaning seems to be that a sharp comparison is drawn between the freedom offered by Christ and the bondage to rules and regulations, after the pattern of the bondage to the stoicheia, though, he adds, they are not really gods.

In Colossians, his approach is entirely different. The false teachers were saying that men were in bondage to the elemental powers of the universe, from whom Christ could *not* free them because He was too low in the hierarchy. St. Paul might have taken the course of argument that all of this was nonsense because the supposed stoicheia were non-entities. But this would have called for a discourse in the field of speculation about metaphysical matters where the false teachers might have argued that their view was as good as Paul's, and certainly more widely held. So Paul takes another line of approach. As we have seen in our discussion of the Colossian heresy in chapter three, he reminds the people of Colossae that Christ is God's "beloved Son," in closest relation with the Father and the bearer of "all the Pleroma of the Godhead." Therefore any adverse teaching put forward that He is not able to redeem from any hostile forces is inconsistent with the facts. The very way in which Paul twice uses the hypothetical εἴτε . . . . εἴτε concerning the hierarchies is enough to cast serious doubt on whether he believed in them in the sense

suggested by the opponents.[1]

At the same time I am not forgetting that Paul certainly believed in some kind of evil forces outside the human personality working in antagonism to the will of God.[2] His malady was regarded as "a messenger of Satan,"[3] and it was he who hindered Paul's purposed visit to Thessalonica.[4] It was the evil powers (the apparent reading), working through men, who were responsible for the crucifying of "the Lord of glory."[5] His struggle against evil was not simply an inner moral struggle but was against "principalities and powers."[6] To him, the whole creation longed for its deliverance.[7] Personal redemption was seen against a larger aspect of Christ's victory over all the forces of evil, however they were to be conceived.

Yet, unless we so interpret his use of stoicheia, there is no indication that he regarded these evil forces as inhabiting the stars and planets and holding their whip over men as Fate and Destiny. While such views may have been current in pagan circles, there is not sufficient reason to think that they were a part of the Apostle's belief.[8]

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1. Col. i. 16, 20.

2. Rom. viii. 38; I Cor. ii. 8; xv. 24-25; II Cor. xii. 7; Eph. i. 21; ii. 2-3; iii. 10; vi. 12; Col. i. 16; ii. 10, 15; I Thess. ii. 18.

3. II Cor. xii. 7.

4. I Thess. ii. 18.

5. I Cor. ii. 8.

6. Eph. vi. 12.

7. Rom. viii. 19-22.

8. Some sources of reference are given on the next page.

The following is a list of some of the sources of information on stoicheia:

Abbott, ICC, Ephesians and Colossians, on Col. ii. 8.

Bousset, Hauptprobleme der Gnosis, pp. 54 ff., and 223 ff.

Deissmann's article "Elements" in Encyclopaedia Biblica.

Dibelius, Handbuch zum Neuen Testament, an die Kolosser, Epheser an Philemon, pp. 13-14 and 19 ff.

Die Geisterwelt im Glauben des Paulus, pp. 136 ff.

Dieterich, Abraxas, pp. 43 ff.

Dodd, The Bible and the Greeks, on "powers," pp. 17 ff., and 109 ff.

Duncan, MNTC, Galatians, Intro. xxxv., and pp. 134 ff.

Everling, Die paulinische Angelologie und Damonologie, pp. 66 ff.

Hincks, article on "Stoicheia" in Journal of Biblical Literature, 1896, Vol. XV, pp. 183 ff.

Knox, St. Paul and the Church of the Gentiles, pp. 63, 103-104, 108-109, and 289.

Massie's article "Element" in Hastings's Dictionary of the Bible.

Peake, EGT, on Colossians ii. 8.

Spitta, Der zweite Brief des Petrus und der Brief des Judas, 1885, pp. 263 ff.

Wendland, Die hellenistisch-romanische Kultur, pp. 171 ff.

Practically all of the above interpret the word in the sense of "elemental spirits." But beyond that, there is a wide range of opinion as to what this includes. For the contrary viewpoint, that the word means "the elementary things of religion," or the "elements of the world," or "worldliness," see the commentaries of Lightfoot, Meyer, Burton, and others; and Knox, St. Paul and the Church of Jerusalem, pp. 113 f., where he seems to have a different view from that expressed in the book above.

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